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# ART STUDIES:

THE

“OLD MASTERS” OF ITALY;

## Painting.

BY

JAMES JACKSON JARVES,

AUTHOR OF “ART-HINTS,” “PARISIAN SIGHTS,” ETC., ETC.

COPPERPLATE ILLUSTRATIONS.

*“Oh, happy those few who sit at that table where the bread of angels is eaten; and miserable those that partake of food in common with beasts.”*

DANTE, Convito. Trat. I. cap. 1.



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To

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

These Art-Studies are Dedicated, with cordial  
Sympathy and Regard.

JAMES JACKSON JARVES.



## PREFACE.

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THE proper aim of a work of this character is so interwoven with the entire text that the author, in a preface, has little else to say than to request those who feel a real interest in art to patiently keep him company to the end. Those who do not should stop here. All or nothing is better in this instance. For, with less than a thorough perusal — cavil who may afterwards — both the topic and author may be misinterpreted. Yet, in the Epic struggle of Life going on in America, resolving rough and serious problems of all sorts, in which struggle our population seem to be ever striving to catch up with something that as constantly eludes their grasp, how can one hope to persuade the people to borrow even a few moments from their great match with Time, to give heed to the lessons and enjoyments of art? The author, while in America, finds himself, voluntarily or not, borne rapidly along by the great tide of human action, and also feels the thrill of the eager pursuit after that practical and material ideal of success which gives strength to our



national sinews, endurance to our frames, and intensity to our intellectual energies. With all this he can and does cordially sympathize. Not, however, as an end, but as a means of the true greatness which is ultimately to be born to us as a nation. It is a cause of rejoicing to belong to a *working* epoch; of delight, to perceive the germs of those grand destinies which, if we are true to the principles of Christian freedom, will at our ripened touch burst forth into vigorous life. The nobility and beauty of that art which is herein delineated were the fruits of the democratic energies and faith of mediæval Italy; akin in spirit to those, which, in our own blood, are preparing our country for an equally glorious career in art: while Italy herself, as a united whole, is uprising to a new birth, to keep us company in the drama of progress. Whatever, therefore, each American or Italian can find to do to hasten the national advance in art, science, or religion, he should do it with his whole heart and soul.

If there be overmuch enthusiasm in this work, it is the result of deep-seated feeling, and not to be apologized for. Still, the practical end of interesting the general reader, by giving in a succinct form the facts and ideas which best illustrate the periods of painting passed in review, avoiding antiquarian prolixity without omitting essential information, has been steadily kept in view; perhaps too much so to satisfy captious critics. It is difficult to present

the history of art in a popular form and at the same time do it complete justice. The public will not be long in telling the author how far he has failed in either respect. It should not, however, be forgotten that these are simply "Studies;" studying implies learning; so that the only advantage the author has over his readers generally is that, from having begun his training in art sooner, possibly he may be a few paces ahead of them in information. Be that as it may, dear reader, he commends to your kindly regard Introduction, Body, and Appendix, omitting nothing. For he hopes it will be for your good to read *all*, as it has been for his to write; while he wishes you, like himself, thorough enjoyment in art.





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ERRATUM. Page 445, line 11, for *deprecate* read *depreciate*.





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# INTRODUCTION.

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## PART I.

Art as an Element of Civilization. Means of its Diffusion and Progress in Europe—in America. Fallacies in the American Theory of Government. Foundation of true Government. Its Nature and Duties. One-sidedness of American Political Economy. Apotheosis of Riches. Equal claims of Art with Science in National Culture. The Essential Distinction between Civilization and Barbarism. How Art refines. Its relation to the Religious Faculty—to the *Æsthetic*—Beauty and Virtue. Art as an Aid to Education. How its Knowledge can be most readily diffused. The Province and Capacity of Art. The Chief Neglect of American Education. Taste. Hints for a System of Art-Training. Museums and Galleries. England an Example for America.

THE total result of human progress we term *CIVILIZATION*. This word epitomizes morality under the aspect of religion, art, and science, and the consequent good order, refinement, and well-being of men. These conditions being the aims of human effort, it behooves us not only to attentively study their elements, but by every available means to add to the general *HAPPINESS* which springs from them, and which, rightly understood, is the great *DUTY* of life.

By *Happiness*, we mean that welfare which results from understanding and obeying Divine Law. It is based upon the harmonious action of the moral, intellectual and physical man, to the intent to grow in knowledge, virtue, and health. Art being one of the essential conditions of civilization, it is well to establish, on fundamental principles, its claims to serious consideration.

Science represents the Strength of civilization; Art its Beauty. Their harmonious union preserves the rightful balance between spirit and matter.

We now propose briefly to discuss the means for the diffusion and progress of Art. These means spring from individual effort and governmental action. The former is regulated by the will and capacity. In the degree that they are strengthened and enlightened will be the activity and influence of their possessor. In America, government being based upon the popular understanding, the efficiency of the one is in the ratio of the enlightenment of the other. Hence, in pressing home an argument which embraces the welfare of the people, their understandings must be convinced and their interests aroused, before their action can be felt under the form of government. While, therefore, the individual must decide for himself how he can best promote civilization by advancing art, it is desirable to awaken the national mind to a more active sense of its duties towards it.

There are two conspicuous fallacies in the American theory of government. First, that all men are born free and equal; and secondly, that the will of the majority is the true source of rule. Nature disproves the former in every type of her works, while man by his infirmities gives the lie to the latter. True government is founded, not upon the divine right of kings, but of great principles, which, as the breath of life from the Creator, pervade creation, vitalizing its existence by eternal laws of truth, beauty, and love, temporarily subdued to the license of human will, out of which, Phœnix-like, arise individual development and general progress. Real government is of necessity a despotism, in the sense of enforcing obedience, as we see in the inflexible operation of Providence. Obedience is the corollary of Law. All order is rooted in law. This is heaven. Disorder is hell. Hence, by whomsoever public affairs are guided, his rule is valid only as he discovers and applies the laws of God to the happiness of man. The credentials of emperor, priest, lynch-judge, or president, are all stereotyped upon the same parchment, and are wanting as each fails in recognizing the universal Authority which points out "the way, the truth, the life." Perfect government will arrive only when the under-

standings of all men, enlightened as to the true character of divine law, yield a willing obedience through the spirit of love. Then the wisdom of the prophets who discern the signs in the heavens and walk in the way thereof, be they few or many, will be the true fountain of rule. Until in the fulness of progress that time comes, however much we creep or stumble, let us lift our faces heavenward in earnest faith and effort.

Recognizing divinity as the legitimate basis of government, it follows that the temporal authority is genuine only as it is affiliated with the divine. This may be manifested through one will or many, so that no form is of itself absolutely or necessarily right. The more enlightened the ruling will, morality being equal, the better the government. Hence, to whatever form of authority mankind submit, the vital problem is not, whether it is legitimatized by a crown or vote, but whether its qualifications best secure liberty of self-development and universal progress. The sole solid foundation of political power is the intelligent assent of the governed.

In America the will of the majority governs. Whatever, therefore, concerns the science of government, before it can have executive force, must receive the sanction of the people themselves. In Europe, on the contrary, the government itself, in Art, Science, and even Religion, takes the initiative in change or progress, or seeks to guide each for its special purposes. The American method throws the responsibility of action or inaction directly upon those whose interests are most largely at stake. Their own suffrages decide their good and evil. It is, however, difficult to arouse the masses from their routine of thought or action, or to awaken in them higher aspirations than their more pressing material interests or pleasures. But their intelligence once set in motion, its momentum carries them forward like an ocean-surge, until a new cycle of progress being fulfilled, it spends itself on the shores of eternity.

Happiness being the aim of the individual and the object of the government, whatever best secures it in an elevated



sense, is to each a paramount duty. All rulers profess to be solicitous for the material welfare of their peoples. As food, shelter, and health, are the primary conditions of being, no government is challenged for assuming the responsibilities that attend their production and regulation. But political economy has even a loftier mission than cotton and corn. It embraces other subjects of social importance beside telegraphs and railroads. It has to deal with something more than crops, kine, or taxation. Man's back and belly are not the total of his organization. A *pâté de foie grase* is a nice thing; so is an easy chair. Wealth is a prophet, and to be hearkened to. Luxury ripens civilization. It would be joy indeed to know that every one was well-fed, well-lodged, and well-clad. It is noble to harness lightning and enslave steam. Antipodal price-currents that have outrun time in their race to markets are a keen whet to a merchant's breakfast appetite. The electrical pulse of commerce now beats a healthful measure around the globe. All praise to riches! Science has fairly won its apotheosis. Golden, very golden is our Diana!! All hail, therefore, material progress!!!

Government wearies its brains in attempts to solve the relations between gastric juice a-hungered and thievery; alcohol and brutality; passion and crime: and in despair of better solution, seeks security and solace in dungeons and hangings. It is easier—at all events, quicker—to turn a bolt or to wrench a spine, than to reform. Repression rather than prevention, like to like, violence to violence, not homeopathically applied, but in allopathic dose: such has been the convenient panacea of nations for the social antagonisms bred from the putridities of civilization. Better than utter license are these multitudinous chokings and lockups. Evil is not to be lightly said of things useful in their day and way. But there is another remedy now struggling for room in the human heart. We know all about mine and thine as goods and chattels. We fully comprehend how blood, bone, and muscle, thrive on grain, beef, and grape. Our harvests, though not altogether equitably divided, are enough to annihilate hunger.



Comfort — yes, luxury — are household gods. But we do not sufficiently feel that we have senses more important in our souls' growth than even these. Of dust the former are born, and they go down to the dust. Of the spirit are born the latter, and they aspire to heaven. The world is a-hungered for spiritual food.

What nature is to God, art is to man ; his interpretation of Beauty — the reflected image of his soul. Beauty comprises not merely form and color to please our senses, but every degree of moral truth and intellectual gratification that can be represented or suggested by artistic skill, inspired either by imitative or creative faculties. In its ordinary acceptation it is too much confounded with pleasure. True delight in art depends upon its fidelity to noble truth. Art which is merely external, is ever wanton or superficial.

Refinement being the essential distinction between civilization and barbarism, whatever increases it is of paramount consideration. The degree of refinement among all races has been in the ratio of their culture of art. Refinement does not necessarily include morality. That, being based upon the religious idea, may be quite independent of art. Art is pure and a people virtuous, to the extent that religion is the controlling sentiment. Corruption of manners and political degradation have, it is true, been contemporaneous with great artistic acquirements. But, in such examples, art had become the sensual image of festered passions, or else the gross agent of superstition. Being but the chiselled or colored index of the soul's loves or thoughts, it reflects the quality of the mind that begets it, with the clearness of light. It is a vulgar error to consider art of itself as a corruptor. It is simply a means in the rise and fall of nations. As the hearts of peoples shape it, so it is — neither better nor worse than themselves. A corruptor if they seek corruption ; a purifier if they seek purification.

How does Art refine ?

No one is so simple as to doubt that science is conducive to progress. Neither would any one in regard to art, were its

nature and principles as well known as are those of the former. But while the laws of matter have been attentively studied, those of the faculty which takes cognizance of the language addressed to the soul, have been either thrust aside, or made of accidental or secondary importance. Yet, in the scale of humanity, they are higher in origin and loftier in purpose. They speak directly, through the imagination and feeling, to those aspirations which bind human nature to immortality. They assuage man's thirst for beauty ; they stimulate his idealization ; they incite his desire for perfection ; they connect by symbolization all material nature with the nobler existences of futurity : the seen becomes the intelligible correspondence of the unseen, and the panting soul finds peace and joy in the Present, inasmuch as, with the prophetic eye and ear of art, it beholds the windows of heaven opened, and hears celestial voices calling to it therefrom.

Without these images of truth and beauty, shown either through the imagination or created by art, there can be no real refinement of soul. Indeed, there can be no soul, for there is no immortality for it to live upon. Vicious artists, there have been — unbelieving artists, never. Art is significant of faith. Wherever art has been purest and noblest, religious faith has been most active. Ancient Greece and mediæval Italy bear evidence to this. And not alone Italy, but all Europe of the middle ages. Olympus and paradise, cathedral and temple, have descended to us in plastic testimony to this truth. And religion was refined and beautiful as it made a handmaid of art — foul and unlovely as it enslaved it. Finally, art, by refining the forms of religion, lifts the soul by the ties of beauty to the unseen, whence all goodness descends. Like gold, it blesses him whose heart and hands are clean. Like gold, if wedded to vileness, it taints all that it touches.

Next in importance to its influence upon the religious faculty, is its power to refine the intellect, to enlarge its field of observation, to give a wider scope of action to its powers, and by the harmonies of form and color, as with the magnetism of music, to place the entire being in sympathy with Beauty

under every condition of loveliness which the beneficent Creator has lavished upon his works. Man is lifted by art above sordid care and vulgar necessity, and instructed in the speech of the soul. The Past and Future become the Present. Antiquity holds converse with Modernism. Through its agency great thoughts speak out in one universal tongue to all the world. The grandeur and extent of the universe; everything that has a being upon our planet; the far-off wonder, and the landscape that fronts our hearth-stones; every thought that thrills the mind; each affection that nestles in the heart; God's image in man; His lessons graven on stones, or painted on the sky; the prophetic threat and promised blessing; all that tries humanity or sustains it; man's entire compass of happiness and misery, faith and doubt; all this is the province of art. Nothing that the human intellect can conceive is beyond its aspiration to represent. By its laws man himself becomes a creator. Soaring far beyond the range of visible things, his imagination projects new worlds, new beings, and demonstrates its immortality through its infinity of power. Whatever, therefore, expands the divine gift, multiplying God's talents, is worthy of earnest cultivation.

Beauty, in its highest significance, and goodness, are synonymous. Abstract beauty of line and color exist independent of moral quality. Man may lust for that beauty which suggests passion; but no sooner has his concupiscence touched it than it becomes a foul and loathsome thing. There is a beauty in the nice adaptation of means to ends by Nature throughout all her works; a scientific beauty of uses, irrespective of sentiment. But the satisfaction to the thoughtful mind, lies less in mere shape and hue than in the design they display, — the fit adjustment of the meanest and most unlovely things in the scale of creation, and the unwitting evidence borne by them to a divine cause and plan. The existence of every creature, whatever its comparative position, discloses mysteries of divine goodness beautiful to recognize in the broad symphony of creation. Hence, there is no perception of wisdom or goodness without an accompanying recognition of the beautiful. As

art is enabled to make manifest these aspects of Nature, the understanding becomes quickened with divine light. Gratitude arises to the Giver. Our moral and intellectual faculties becoming reinvigorated, we make a step forward in our eternal progress.

Secondary to this mental exaltation and expansion, but of almost equal importance, is the effect of noble art, by the subtle harmonies of the beautiful, upon manners. A keen appreciation of the beautiful predisposes to the beautiful in action. Such a mind craves grace, symmetry, and adaptation in all things. It wages continual war against whatever offends the eye or suggests wrong, ugliness, or artifice. A correct taste is akin to correct morals; purity of habits to purity of mind; while public order and cleanliness are indispensable to a high degree of artistic development. A fine taste may exist apart from correct morals, and the reverse, just as we often see order and neatness without any feeling for art, and the opposite. In the mixed human faculties we constantly find strange incongruities arising from the lack of the proper development and harmonious balance of the entire mind. Often the people of Italy disgust the less artistic northern races by gross violations of public decency and cleanliness: and it also sometimes occurs that highly cultivated minds are equally vicious. These instances are, however, exceptional. Traced home, we find that they obtain among those whose condition in life is low and rude, or whose taste for art is of secondary consideration to egotism and vice. Watered from an impure spring, it necessarily partakes of the dominant traits of the individual character, and is a thing quite apart from a pure love of art for its own worth. The proposition at large remains true. No people can properly cultivate art without growing refined and predisposed towards those virtues connected with the appreciation of the beautiful.

At the best, prisons and punishments are an expensive means of but dubious efficacy for regulating society. Art tends to prevent crime, by proffering to the people new and exhaustless pleasures, which enlarge their faculties, stimulate their obser-

vation, and predispose them to brotherhood by a language intelligible to the entire civilized world, thus securing to them sources of happiness and knowledge as free as the air they breathe. Under the constant and profuse inspiration of noble art, by the intense sympathy it begets for beauty, the physical appearance of a race also improves. Greece and Italy evinced this. Legislators, therefore, in developing art, not only provide means for the exercise of the higher faculties, which, when starved, give way to animal enjoyments, but help the finer development of our species by suggesting desires for nobler bodies as the habitations of nobler souls.

How can we best diffuse a knowledge of art?

In Europe the art-element has a recognized position in social and political economy. The governors and governed alike acknowledge it to be an essential principle of civilization. By all classes it is viewed as a necessity of life, on a par in social needs with sewerage, pure water, and gas. Some thinkers even venture the opinion that its culture is as requisite for the healthful growth of the mind as that of wheat for the body; that the heart needs ventilation quite as much as the dormitory. With us, the public voice is dumb. There is no universal demand for Beauty. Yet the divine spark exists in us, and needs but encouragement to grow into a bright and steady light. This will not be, however, until we convince ourselves that art is not the peculiar province of the few born to genius, or the isolated department of egotistical amateurs, claiming it as a specialty too elevated for the crowd. Art is not an object of distant wonder and curiosity — an impenetrable mystery, for a self-elected priesthood. It craves to be the familiar object of all, free to every one. We are apt to look upon it as an exceptional phase of intellect; a thing merely of statues and pictures, to be coldly and curiously gazed upon. On the contrary, it is a loving, refining, joyful, household friend. There is nothing too humble for it to care for, nor too elevated for it to reach. It fraternizes with Nature, and adorns parks and grounds; it leaves its fairy footmarks on lawn and parterre; it speaks of immortality in our grave-yards, making



our cemeteries places of hope and consolation to the living, baptizing the saddened soul with future joy ; it disdains not to point a moral and bestow grace upon the tea-cup ; it finds a resting-place on chair or bedstead ; kisses the lips of beauty from the crystal goblet, and shuns not the uses of kitchen or toilet ; it adorns the limbs of loveliness, and nestles in the bosoms of the fair ; it lends graceful outline and beauteous color to garments ; it sparkles from metal and jewel ; spreads its mantle over cot and palace ; prophesies and preaches from legislative hall and cathedral ; carries flowers and sunshine into our dwellings, and writes on our walls the history, wisdom, and portraiture of the past ; it prepares surprises of beauty in our streets and villas ; clings lovingly to prince or peasant, inoculating with living joys every heart that bids it welcome : in short, art, with the mystery of loveliness and the openness of truth, the humility of the sanctified spirit, and the capacity of the celestial, is ever ready to impregnate all that the necessities of life demand or the soul longs for, with the charms of its perpetual youth and the suggestiveness of those spiritualities whose germs lie far down in the soul of man, awaiting only its quickening touch to commence their progressive unfoldment for Eternity.

Such being the province and capacity of art, our mental blindness, in overlooking its claims, is very strange. We publicly proclaim that we prefer life's rugged and material aspect to its joyful and spiritual beholdings, and while priding ourselves in the completeness of our systems of education, forget their great deficiency. Yet it is as essential to a complete mental training to understand the principles of correct taste, or those laws which create Beauty, and to define its meaning, as to comprehend the science of numbers or the phenomena of chemistry. Indeed, in the measure of our social happiness, they are of greater importance. It is not necessary to be familiar with the mechanical details of art, except as accessories to critical analysis or investigation of styles and methods. It is, however, important to understand, not only its æsthetical rules, but those profound intellectual and moral principles



which are at the root of all art. There can be no intelligent appreciation of art without the cultivation of those faculties that take note of it. Though the feeling for art is indeed spontaneous, its correct development depends upon education. Best work is not the readiest recognized by the uninformed mind. The eye requires training to detect the niceties of artistic expression, both in form and color, just as the ear does for music. Each requires the full sympathy of the soul for entire appreciation. The test of taste is the quality of its likings. If it go spontaneously to the false, shallow, or vicious, it indicates corresponding mental proclivities; if to the noble and true, an innate love of beauty and goodness. Art-education, rightly conducted, is not only a delight, but a source of virtue. Apart from the discernment of the false or superficial, or the appreciation of pure sentiment, the eye is exercised to detect error in design, or lack of harmony in color, and the mind notes whether it be of ignorance or wantonness. By such practice, a standard of correct taste in the fundamental principles of the head and heart may be formed.

Taste, in its popular acceptance, is simply rudimentary liking or dislike. Its natural quality depends upon the temperament of the individual, but it is capricious or intelligent according to cultivation. Teaching will not, it is true, of itself create either artists or a feeling for art. But it can develop talent wherever it discovers it, and so elevate the standard of artistic knowledge and technical skill as to produce enlightened criticism and pure taste.

A knowledge of art tends to self-knowledge, inasmuch as an analysis of the laws of beauty and taste promote an understanding of the powers and purpose of the soul. The imagination is disciplined to regular action, as is reason by the investigation of science. Its vagaries are checked, and its movements understood, so that it becomes subdued from erratic, unlicensed activity, deceptive and reckless because lawless or stimulated by erotic desire, to be the medium of the purest delight and deepest insight into the world of ideas and facts.

By what means may a knowledge and appreciation of art be best promoted?

By the establishment of professorships of art on the same footing as those for science and literature, in our advanced seminaries and colleges, a foundation may be laid of a sound training of artistic feeling, and a national enlightenment as to its scope and mission. Design and coloring need not be technically taught, but the laws which underlie their truth and harmony so demonstrated, that bad taste, like bad manners, would be instinctively disliked and avoided. But the chief value of this branch of education would be in teaching the principles and objects of art, its relation to history and civilization, and particularly its connection, in all times, with the religious and emotional sentiments, and its close affinity with the imaginative and creative faculties. A course of instruction of this character, with appropriate illustrations, would not only enable the student to classify art according to its origin, genealogy, and the quality of the mind it represents, but would gradually create an intelligent public opinion, calculated to arouse the artistic mind to its fullest capacity, by not only demanding noble motive and superior execution, but by resolutely exposing imbecility and artifice. Art should lead the public. When it is unequal to this, an enlightened criticism will, at all events, prevent its sinking beneath its level. If, however, it address itself to an uninformed or indifferent audience its action will be capricious, its spirit mean, and its deceit frequent.

The primary mission of art is the instruction and enjoyment of the people. Hence, its first duty is to make our public buildings and places as instructive and enjoyable as possible. They should be pleasant places, full of attractive beauty and eloquent teachings. Picturesque groupings of natural objects, architectural surprises, sermons from the sculptor's chisel and painter's palette, the ravishment of the soul by its superior senses, the refinement of mind and body by the sympathetic power of beauty; these are a portion of the means which a due estimation of art as an element of civilization inspires the

ruling will to provide freely for all. If art be kept a rare and tabooed thing, a specialty for the rich and powerful, it excites in the vulgar mind envy and hate. But proffer it freely to the public, and the public soon learns to delight in it, and claim and protect it as its rightful inheritance. During the civil strifes of Italy art flourished and was respected. Even rude soldiers, amid the perils and necessities of sieges, turned aside destruction from the walls that sheltered it. The history of art is full of records of its power to soften and elevate the human heart. As soon would man, were it possible, mar one of God's sunsets, as cease to respect what genius has confided to his care, when once his mind has been awakened to its meaning. First, therefore, educate the people in the principles of art, and then scatter among them, with lavish hand, free as water, its richest treasures.

The feeling for art being awakened, museums to illustrate its technical and historical progress, and galleries to exhibit its master-works, become indispensable. In the light of education, appropriations for such purposes are as much a duty of the government, as for any other purpose connected with the true welfare of the people. The responsibilities of government extend over the entire social system. Indeed, unless its care reaches the whole range of human needs and faculties, it destroys the proper balance of mental growth, and places itself in inharmonious relations with the intents of its institution. The world wants *complete* men — men whose physical, moral, and intellectual powers are correspondingly exercised and developed — harmonious men, interiorly and exteriorly satisfied by a due degree of activity and education, provided equally for all their powers. Government should base its qualifications to govern, upon its capacity in developing such citizens. The error of American civilization is in its material one-sidedness, and forced culture of a portion of the faculties at the expense of the remaining ones. We are in danger of losing our mental and physical equilibrium; alcohol and tobacco consuming our bowels after one manner, and commercial selfishness and political chicanery our brains in another. Hence, the greater

necessity of the elevating and neutralizing influences attending the culture of high art.

In free countries, primary public efforts begin with individuals, and their objects, be they railroads, hospitals, or colleges, are subsequently sanctioned and aided by government, in accordance with their merits. With us, art must follow the same path. Private enterprise alone can be relied on, for the present, to initiate means of instruction, galleries, and to provide artistic adornment for public grounds. In time, however, the nation will charge itself with the work. But this result will not arrive, until, in the due course of the realization of the benefits derivable from the general culture of art, the government is invested by public opinion with full powers to direct and foster such a means of civilization on a scale commensurate with the growth and grandeur of the nation. In this respect, England is setting us a wise example. Yet it is barely fifty years since England refused the gift of the pictures that now constitute the Dulwich gallery. So rapidly, however, did public opinion and taste become enlightened, that twenty-five years afterwards Parliament voted £57,000 for the purchase of thirty-eight pictures collected by Mr. Angerstein. This was the commencement of their National Gallery. In 1790, but three national galleries existed in Europe,—those of Dresden, Florence, and Amsterdam. The Louvre was then first originated, by a decree of the Constituent Assembly of France. Both countries now spend with open hand on schools of design, the accumulation of treasures of art of every epoch and character, and whatever tends to elevate the taste and enlarge the means of the artistic education of their people, perceiving, with far-sighted wisdom, that through improved manufacture and riper civilization, eventually a ten-fold return will result to their revenue. The nations of Europe exult over a rare acquisition to their galleries, though its cost may have exceeded \$100,000. We are in that stage of indifference and neglect that one of our wealthiest cities recently refused to accept the donation of a gallery of some 300 pictures, collected by a generous lover of art, because

it did not wish to be put to the expense of finding a locality for them. But this spirit is departing, and now our slowness, or reluctance, is rather the result of a want of knowledge and critical judgment, than of a lack of feeling for art.

To stimulate this feeling, it is requisite that our public should have free access to museums, or galleries, in which shall be exhibited, in chronological series, specimens of the art of all nations and schools, arranged according to their motives and the special influences that attended their development. After this manner a mental and artistic history of the world may be spread out like a chart before the student, while the artist, with equal facility, can trace up to their origin the varied methods, styles, and excellences of each prominent epoch. A gallery of art is a perpetual feast of the most intense and refined enjoyment, to every one capable of entering into its phases of thought and execution, and of analyzing its external and internal being, and tracing the mysterious transformations of spirit into form. But galleries, as they now exist, formed upon no consecutive plan, are like the *disjointed* pages of a book, one being at Berlin, another at Paris, Rome, Florence, Madrid, London, Munich, Vienna, or St. Petersburg ; no one of these singly affording a complete view of the history and progress of art, as should be the design of each, and necessitating the visiting of all to obtain a perfect view of painting at large.

It has been well said, that a complete gallery, on a broad foundation, in which all tastes, styles, and methods harmoniously mingle, is a court of final appeal of one phase of civilization against another, from an examination of which we can sum up their respective qualities and merits, drawing therefrom, for our own edification, as from a perpetual well-spring of inspiration and knowledge. But if we sit in judgment upon the great departed, they likewise sit in judgment upon us. And it is precisely where such means of testing artistic growth best exist, that modern art is at once most humble and most aspiring ; conscious of its own power, and, in many respects, superior technical advantages, both it and the



public are still content to go to the Past for instruction, each seeking to rise above the transitory bias of fashion or local ideas, to a standard of taste that will abide world-wide comparison and criticism.

An edifice for a gallery, or museum of art, should be fire-proof, sufficiently isolated for light and effective ornamentation, and constructed so as to admit of indefinite extension. Its chief feature should be the suitable accommodation and exhibition of its contents. But provision should be made for its becoming, eventually, in architectural effect, consistent with its object. The skeleton of such a building need not be costly. Its chief expense would be in its ultimate adornment with marble facings, richly colored stones, sculpture or frescos, according to a design which should enforce strict purity of taste and conformity to its motive. This gradual completion, as happened to the mediæval monuments of Europe, could be extended through many successive generations, which would thus be linked with one another in a common object of artistic and patriotic pride, gradually growing up in their midst, as a national monument, with its foundations deeply laid in a unity of feeling and those desirable associations of love and veneration, which, in older civilizations, so delightfully harmonize the past with the present. Each epoch of artists would be instructed by the skill of its predecessor, and stimulated to connect its name permanently with so glorious a shrine. Wealth, as in the days of democratic Greece and Italy, would be lavished upon the completion of a temple of art destined to endure, as long as material can defy time, as a monument of the people's taste and munificence. Then would be born among them the spirit of those Athenians who said to Phidias, when he asked if he should use ivory or marble for the statue of their protecting goddess, "*use that material which is most worthy of our city.*"

Until recently, no attention has been paid, even in Europe, to historical sequence and special motives, in the arrangement of galleries. As in the Pitti Gallery, pictures were generally hung so as to conform to the symmetry of the

rooms ; various styles, schools, and epochs, being intermixed. As the progress of ideas is of more importance to note than the variations of styles, or degrees of technical merit, the chief attention in selection and position should be given to lucidly exhibit the varied phases of artistic thought, among the diverse races, and widely separated eras and inspirations which gave them being. The mechanism of art is, however, so intimately interwoven with the idea, that, by giving precedence to the latter, we most readily arrive at the best arrangement of the former. Each cycle of civilization should have its special department, Paganism and Christianity being kept apart, and not, as in the Florentine gallery, intermixed, presenting a strange jumble of classical statuary and modern paintings, in anachronistic disorder, to the loss of the finest properties of each to the eye, and the destruction of that unity of motive and harmonious association so essential to the proper exhibition of art. For it is essential that every variety of artistic development should be associated solely with those objects or conditions most in keeping with its inspiration. In this way we quickest come to an understanding of its originating idea, and sympathize with its feeling, tracing its progress from infancy to maturity and decay, and comparing it, as a whole, with corresponding or rival varieties of artistic development. This systematized variety of one great unity is of the highest importance in placing the spectator in affinity with art as a whole, and its diversities of character, and in giving him sound standpoints of comparison and criticism. In this way, as in the Louvre, feeling and thought are readily transported from one epoch of civilization to another, grasping the motives and execution of each with pleasurable accuracy. We perceive that no conventional standard of criticism, founded upon the opinions or fashions of one age, is applicable to all. To rightly comprehend each, we must broadly survey the entire ground of art, and make ourselves, for the time, members, as it were, of the political and social conditions of life that gave origin to the objects of our investigations. This philosophical mode of viewing art does not exclude an æsthetic point of



view, but rather heightens that, and makes it more intelligible. Paganism could be subdivided into the various national forms that illustrated its rise and fall; Egypt, India, China, Assyria, Greece, Etruria, and Rome, each by itself, as a component part of a great whole. So with Christianity, in such shapes as have already taken foothold on history; the Latin, Byzantine, Lombard, Mediæval, Renaissant, and Protestant art, subdivided into its diversified schools or leading ideas, all graphically arranged, so as to demonstrate, amid the infinite varieties of humanity, a divine unity of origin and design, linking together mankind into one common family.

Beside statuary and paintings, an institution of this nature should contain specimens of every kind of industry in which art is the primary inspiration, to illustrate the qualities and degrees of social refinement of nations and eras. This would include all varieties of ornamental, transitory, or portable art, in which invention and skill are conspicuous, as well as those works more directly inspired by higher motives, and intended as "a joy forever." Architecture, and objects not transportable could be represented by casts, or photographs. Models, drawings, and engravings, also come within its scope, and there should be attached to the parent gallery a library of reference, and lecture and reading rooms.

Connected with it there might be schools of Design, for improvement in ornamental manufacture, the development of architecture, and whatever aids to refine and give beauty to social life, including a simple academic system for the elementary branches of drawing and coloring, upon a scientific basis of accumulated knowledge and experience, providing models and other advantages not readily accessible to private resources, but leaving individual genius free to follow its own promptings, upon a well-laid technical foundation. As soon as the young artist has acquired the grammar of his profession, he should be sent forth to study direct from Nature, and to mature his inventive faculties unfettered by authoritative academic system, which more frequently fosters conventionalism, and imposes trammels upon talent, than endows it with strength and freedom.

Such is a brief sketch of institutions feasible amongst us, from humble beginnings by individual enterprise. Once founded, and their value demonstrated, the countenance of the State might be hopefully invoked. Their very existence would become an incentive to munificent gifts. Individuals owning fine works of art would grow ambitious to have their memories associated with patriotic enterprise. Art invokes liberality, and evokes fraternity. The sentiment that there is a common property in the productions of genius, making possession a trust for the public welfare, would increase among those by whose taste and wealth they have been accumulated. Masterpieces would cease to be regarded as the selfish acquisitions of covetous amateurs, and, like spoken truth, become the inalienable birthright of the peoples; finding their way freely and generously through the magnetic influences of public spirit and pertinent examples to those depositories where they can most efficaciously perform their mission of truth and beauty to the world. Then the people themselves will begin to take pride in their artistic wealth, to honor artists as they now do soldiers and statesmen, and to value the more highly those virtues which are interwoven with all noble effort. In 1823, when the National Gallery of England was founded, the English were nearly as dead to art as we are now. A few amateurs alone cultivated it, but there was no general sympathy with, nor knowledge of it. Yet, by 1837, in donations alone, the gallery had received one hundred and thirty-seven pictures. Since that period, gifts have increased tenfold in value and numbers. Up to 1860, while but two hundred and one pictures in all have been purchased, four hundred and sixty-four, including the Sheepshanks collection, have been given, and with the Turner gallery, two hundred and fourteen bequeathed to the nation. Connected with the National Gallery, and a part of that noble, comprehensive, munificent system of art-education which the British government has incited, are the British and South Kensington Museums, with their widely expanded and wisely directed systems of intellectual training. Schools of Design, with every appliance for the

growth of art, have rapidly sprung into existence. Private enterprise and research have correspondingly increased. British agents, with unstinted means, are everywhere ransacking the earth in quest of everything that can add to the value and utility of their national and private collections. A keen regard for all that concerns art, a desire for its national development, an enlightened standard of criticism, and with it the most eloquent art-literature of any tongue, have all recently sprung into existence in our mother-land. All honor to those generous spirits that have produced this — and honor to the nation that so wisely expends its wealth. A noble example for America! England also throws open to the competition of the world plans for her public buildings and monuments. Mistakes and defects there have been, as in every human effort, but an honest desire for amendment, and to promote the intellectual growth of the nation, now characterize her pioneers in this cause. And what progress! Between 1823 and 1850, on the Museum alone, there have been expended \$10,000,000. Within twelve years, \$450,000 have been expended on the National Gallery for pictures, and yet its largest access of treasures is by gifts and bequests. Lately, beside the Pisani Veronese bought for \$70,000, eight other paintings have been purchased at the expense of \$50,000. \$36,000, in 1858, were given for the choice of twenty of the early Italian schools, from the Lombardi-Baldi gallery, at Florence; not masterpieces, but simply characteristic specimens, more or less restored. The average cost of late acquisitions, has been about \$6,000 each. In 1858, there were 823,000 visitors to both branches of the National Gallery. Who can estimate the pleasure and instruction afforded by such an institution to its million of annual visitors, and the ideas and inspiration thence borne, destined to fructify and grow into the glory and good of the nation? At present there are seventy-seven schools of art in England, attended by 68,000 students. In 1859, these, and kindred institutions, received a public grant of nearly \$450,000. The appropriation for the British Museum alone, for 1860, is nearly \$400,000. To the Louvre,

Louis XVIII. added one hundred and eleven pictures, at a cost of about \$132,000 ; Charles X., twenty-four, at \$12,000 ; Louis Phillipe, fifty-three, at \$14,500 ; and Napoleon III., thus far, thirty paintings, costing \$200,000, one of which, the Murillo, cost \$125,000. Russia is following in the same path. Italy, Greece, and Egypt, by stringent regulations, are making it yearly more difficult for any precious work to leave their shores. If, therefore, America is ever to follow in the same path, she must soon bestir herself, or she will have nothing but barren fields to glean from.\*

\* The following are the number of pictures in the chief public galleries of Europe. At Rome, in the Vatican, thirty-seven—in the Capitol, two hundred and twenty-five. The Brera, at Milan, has five hundred and three. Naples, seven hundred. The Pitti, at Florence, has five hundred. The Uffizi, more than twelve hundred, and the Academy nearly four hundred more. The Venetian and Bolognese Academies number about three hundred each. The Städel Institution, at Frankfort, has three hundred and fifty. In the Amsterdam Museum there are three hundred and eighty-six—at the Hague, three hundred and four. Brussels boasts four hundred and upwards, and Antwerp nearly the same number. The Pinacothek, at Munich, one thousand two hundred and seventy, and Berlin one thousand three hundred and fifty. These two galleries have been established but a short time. The Louvre counts one thousand eight hundred, the collection at Madrid one thousand eight hundred and thirty-three, and that at Dresden about two thousand pictures. Versailles has nearly three thousand pictures, illustrative of French history. The Borghese, at Rome, one of the largest and best of private galleries, contains five hundred and twenty-six paintings.

## PART II.

Criticism of Art. Popular Fallacies. Knowledge indispensable. The Instinct of Taste. What is necessary in the Spectator for Correct Appreciation. Two Points of View of Criticism—their just balance. Motive, Choice, Action, Laws of Composition. Duty of Criticism. Superficial and Sound Criticism. Meaning of Color. The Laws of Harmony and Fitness. Relative Importance of Various Departments of Art. Common and High Art. The term Beautiful. Recapitulation — 1st, Art, in Degree; 2d, in Quality.

IF we recognize the principles and history of Art as a branch of general education, and stimulate its production, it is necessary to know something of the rules of criticism. We can but briefly point out some of the most obvious considerations. On so subtle a subject, in the allotted space of an introduction, an exhaustive essay is not to be expected. At the very best, we can only throw out such ideas or suggestions as are most applicable to the object in view, leaving our readers to tone them according to their own feelings and knowledge. But taste, like conscience, is subject to law. There is a right and wrong in beauty, as in morals. Yet no fallacy is more universal than that so persistently urged by novices in art: "I like it, or dislike it, and therefore it must be good or bad; it pleases or displeases me, and that is all I care about it." And such is the vulgar standard of criticism to which artists sometimes submit, or worse, pander, to the utter disregard of their own better informed taste.

A correct appreciation of objects of art, according to their relative position in the scale of ideal beauty, or even strictly naturalistic truth, is only to be acquired by a corresponding cultivation of the eye and taste. Elevated sentiment, elegant form, and harmonious coloring, are not the great attractions of the uninformed masses, in popular exhibitions. The Greek and Italian races are to the manor born of the beautiful, and freely and sympathetically recognize it in all shapes and under all conditions of art or life; their highest enjoyments



being in its spontaneous recognition. But among ourselves and our immediate relations on the other side of the Atlantic, the reverse of this is the popular fact. We have yet to learn to appreciate and prefer the higher qualities of art; to estimate at their true difference the low or common from the ideal and noble. Museums of natural objects still have the preference with us over galleries of art. At the Great Exhibition of 1851, in London, it was observed by Sir J. G. Wilkinson, that the largest crowds were collected about the stuffed animals and the illustrated story of Reynard, the Fox. The difference between objects of natural history and of high-art, as food for the intellect, is the difference between God's working through *matter* or through *mind*. The one is FORMATION, the other CREATION; law ruling the former, free-will the latter. There is, therefore, an imperative necessity, if we would learn to distinguish objects at their true value, of having art of every degree within our reach to study. Beginning with a crude admiration of mere imitation of common objects, as childhood does with its toys, as our minds expand and intellect is trained, we shall gradually rise to the quick perception and full enjoyment of best work and loftiest thought.

There can be no intelligent criticism without a corresponding knowledge. The foundation of appreciation in the spectator, and the root of success in the artist, each lies in the proper understanding and perfect feeling of both for the subject, and their mutual disdain of ignoble art. The quality of criticism depends upon the moral and intellectual cultivation of the community. As the heart is pure and good, so will it exact holy and truthful motive. In the ratio of study and experience will the spectator be qualified to decide how far the artist gives correct expression to material. A susceptible temperament or lively fancy will be spontaneously moved by every artistic affinity. The artist can, therefore, with propriety, submit to the natural emotions to test how far his work is endowed with genuine feeling. It is his province, first, to excite sensations; secondly, to instruct. For success in the former, it is indispensable that he should be largely imbued with the pas-

sions and sentiments common to the universal heart, and so to impregnate his work with humanity that it shall quicken all kindred feeling. Thus far the *instinct* of taste may be trusted. It is the test of fraternity between the spectator and the artist, and is refined or rude according to constitutional bias. By association or exercise it may grow nobler or baser. Morally, it is of the highest value in pointing out the proclivities of the soul. But as a guide, it is dubious and liable to lead ditchwise, unless disciplined by intellect.

When art assumes to teach, it is intelligible only as the level of the spectator's comprehension approaches its own standard of knowledge. Hence, it is all-important that its audience should be intellectually qualified to analyze its entire conditions of being. Sympathetic thought is founded upon sympathetic capacity, not of hands, for that is the prerogative of genius, given for the express purpose of creation, but of the innate power to comprehend. In this sense, before the artist can receive full justice, a mental equilibrium must be established between himself and his critic. Although the faculty of creating art may be withheld, by means of a disciplined imagination and mental culture, the spectator may become an intelligent judge of the highest efforts.

There are two generic points of view of criticism, which embrace all minor features. These are founded upon the predominance of either the perceptive faculties, taking primary cognizance of externals, or the superior sentiments, which look directly to the inner sense of things. Sound criticism depends upon their well adjusted balance. The former, in its superficial aspect, is the basis of popular judgment. The latter, that of the few who possess that keen spiritual appreciation, which is the fruit of a peculiarly gifted organization, giving them, as with nice ears for music, additional senses of enjoyment. With such, the eye is the window of the soul, lighting up the interior meaning of things. Yet, even with them, study and experience increase their subtlety and depth of vision. How much more, then, do the faculties of obtuse and indifferent persons need education, to enable them to appreciate the entire meaning of art!



The first, and highest office of criticism, is to penetrate the *motive*. This includes inspiration, intention, compass, and composition, as an entirety ; in fine, the spirit that animates the idea and vitalizes its forms. Lines, hues, and sounds, are but the alphabet. Their use and combination make up the speech of art. Consequently, the first consideration should be, not its grammar, but the quality of its soul.

To feel and comprehend this, the inquirer must put himself in affinity with the peculiar conditions of mind which have given being to the phase of art he proposes to examine. To appreciate pagan or catholic art, it is not requisite to be a pagan or papist, but is essential that he should let himself sufficiently into the local feeling and thought of his subject as to do justice to the Past, while summoning it to respond before the varied conditions and superior progress of the Present. Without an effort to know the Why and Whereof of our predecessors, we will fail in an adequate conception of their work, and limit our range of judgment to the narrow measure of an individual life. How often contempt, ridicule, or neglect, are meted to objects at a superficial view, which, upon a close acquaintance, kindle pleasurable emotions, and demand profound respect !

The power of sentiment over mechanical execution, to awaken feeling at sight, is a satisfactory proof of the superiority of the soul over matter, for spirit attracts spirit as persistently as water seeks a level. Consequently, if in looking upon art, however uncouth, as in some Byzantine forms, or marvellously beautiful, as in the best days of Greece, the spectator is directly impressed with the motive of the artist, and his fidelity of expression, he may be assured that he is in the right path to a correct understanding of it. When the sentiment is promptly recognized as pure and noble, the most important element of art is at its foundation, both in the work and the critic.

The second point of view is that which takes cognizance of externals. This includes the entire question of technical merit, or how far the artist has been successful in clothing his idea in

its fittest shape and hue. A full analysis embraces a wide range of professional skill. The chief points, however, according to their order, which decide the relative merits of works of art, in both of the above respects, may be put in few words.

First, CHOICE. A motive may be good, but the choice, which relates to the particular form or expression to be given to the idea, may be poor. Hence, criticism must first exact that the choice shall be such as best defines the motive of the artist.

Included in choice are the period and extent of action. Grecian artists, with whom the æsthetic motive was the ruling inspiration, paid much attention to these points. They sought to bestow upon art its best possible conditions of time, repose, or movement, corresponding to the emotions they wished to excite. There is a climax to every sentiment or act, as there is a best position for sight. As the artist departs from them, he becomes weak, with a tendency to exaggeration or caricature, faults which the Byzantine and Græco-Italian schools fell into from neglecting the law of beauty for what, to them, were the superior claims of mystic thought or religious feeling, thus making art secondary to theology; while subsequently, in the decadence of the Tuscan schools, in the 16th century, noble motive and pure design were lost in the vanity of academic display and misplaced science; anatomical dexterity being preferred to the higher calls of art.

COMPOSITION, or the arrangement of the subject, comes next in importance. Talent is often sunk in mediocrity from neglect of its laws. However effective the motive, and judicious the choice, both are lost upon the spectator if the artist fail to combine them so as to present a central point of interest to which all else harmoniously tends, preserving a unity of action and sentiment, combined with symmetrical and natural construction and invention, while admitting as much variety of accessories and expression as is consistent with the idea as a whole. In its widest and loftiest significance, it is *creative*, and may be said to include also motive and choice. It then becomes the profoundest test of genius. The materials provided by the Creator, whether in the natural world, or the

sphere of mind, are used as aids or suggestions, from which, by the alchemic power of the imagination, genius creates new worlds of thought and emotion, and opens to view the mysteries of inner life.

The characteristics of Composition as Design, are breadth, strength, freedom, grace, fertility, and insight : as color, transparency, depth, gradation, fusion, lucidity, clearness, harmony, and tone ; in fine, of all qualities in each, in relation to the subject, which may be included in natural truth. By their degree of harmony and fidelity to nature we are to decide upon the technical merits of art ; and while admitting the superiority of creative talent, we must insist that art, like its prototype, nature, shall be diligent and exact in every portion of her work. It must not merely suggest great powers, but clothe them in forms of like excellence. Genius, however fertile of thought and vigorous of stroke, cannot do this without submitting to the law of labor. Seemingly, great artists do their best work without labor. But analyze it, and every detail of invention and touch shows intense thought and a mathematical exactness of execution to be acquired only by unceasing effort. This refinement of work, which, according to its emphasis and variety, constitutes the sign-manuals of great masters, is, however, not to be confounded with the littleness of the *genre* schools, whose industry and dexterity are so successful in giving the barren imitation of things. In much of their art we find correct design, truthful color, and a fair counterfeit of externals. But as compared with that creative art which recognizes the soul in nature, it is as dry bones. It appeals solely to the material senses, and talks only of vulgar necessities and familiar uses. The other is vitalized by intellect and emotion. External forms, with it, are means, not ends. Hence, it is prone to overlook their importance as language, trusting overmuch to the vigor, beauty, or profundity of its inherent power, and, in consequence, sometimes fails in being promptly understood, from lack of obedience to the entire code of artistic law ; just as great thoughts are often vague or unintelligible from over-compactness or mystic depth. The extremes of these

qualities of art become, on the one hand, too realistic, and on the other, ultra-transcendental or symbolical, each neglecting those truths that make the success of the other. Thorough good art springs from the joint and equal operation of hand and mind ; noblest art, of both, inspired by the profoundest emotions of the soul. It is, therefore, the duty of criticism, while respecting the freedom of the artist, to urge the necessity of well-balanced inspiration and execution. Superficial observers are first attracted by the externals of art, because their faculties have never been exercised upon other than its relations to the material senses. Sound criticism reverses this. First, it analyzes the motive ; then the choice ; afterwards, the composition, and finally, the technical skill, awarding merit according to the predominating goodness of each, pronouncing the whole perfect, only when it fully satisfies the soul's craving for the Beautiful.

The science of color, both in its material adjustment to beauty, and its moral meaning, is not generally understood. Of itself, color is neutral, being neither good nor evil except as it is used. Coloring is, however, something more than surface painting. It may be made hideous by inharmonious combinations, or vicious by sensual longings. Over the soul it has the power of music. A painting in which the colors are properly related to each other and their subject, possesses the exquisite harmony of a symphony of Mozart. The moral of color is greatly overlooked. Few analyze its symbolical relations to character, so well comprehended by the Oriental seers, and the Christian painters of mediæval Italy. With many artists, the feeling for it is a blind instinct, which often leads them into expression in hues foreign to their artistic aims, though true to their own idiosyncrasies of temperament. Character unveils itself by means of color in no slight degree. It betrays those who are false to its infinite capacity to give to Beauty its purest significance. By its use the soul may be edified, or the senses sensualized. Every sentiment or passion has its concomitant hue ; nor are abstract intellectual qualities without their significant livery. Criticism should, therefore,

exact of color, as of design, purity, fitness, and harmony. And this the more, that through its seductions bad taste and corrupt morals are so readily diffused.

The law of harmony requires fitness in all points. Hence, the material should be appropriate to the idea. The perspective and details of landscape are unsuited for sculpture. Plumage, foliage, and things ductile, flexible, and ever moving, are not to be evoked from the solid rock. Strength and mass are for that; lightness is for wood; transparency for glass; ease and freedom are for clay or stucco; and tenacity and ductility for metals, as they can be hammered into the shapes of natural objects with ease. Ghiberti and his school, forsaking the purer taste and classical inspiration of Niccola Pisano, neglected this law, and, notwithstanding the marvellous beauty of their works, we cannot but feel that they have put marble and bronze to incongruous uses; just as the disciples of Michel Angelo tried to give to painting the character of sculpture, and as, in our time, Gibson, misled by the practice of antiquity, which was governed by reasons of climate or religion, paints and gilds his statues to obtain a more life-like effect.

Harmony further requires of the artist, beside an unity of feeling, thought, and material, that he should preserve his own proper relation to his subject. It is not uncommon to find work permeated with the idiosyncrasies of the author. But egotism and shallowness are synonymous features in art. The trick of feeble minds is a repetition of self, or theft from their superiors. But that individuality which stamps genius with a style, founding schools of expression, as in the great masters, is a divine egotism, and wholly apart from the pettiness of the former.

A harmonious relation of accessories to principals is highly important. No cleverness in details can absolve inattention in this respect. The miscalled Preraphaelites of our time, exaggerating the law of fidelity in parts, and losing sight of the broader principle of effect by which particulars are absorbed into large masses, protrude upon the sight with microscopic clearness the near and the distant, delineating the tiniest



flower in a wide landscape, of which, in nature, it would form, at their point of sight, but an uncertain speck of color, with the minuteness of an isolated object close at hand. With them, pebbles and petals are made of equal importance with the human countenance, and the texture of garments with the play of features. Consequently, while conscientiously laborious on the lesser truths and values of nature, they exalt them so high in artistic manipulation and relative position, that they have no commensurate force reserved for more important facts. All things being equally indicated, foregrounds and backgrounds and middle distance alike distinct and defined, the spectator is as likely to find himself admiring the clever imitation of a cobweb, as taken with the proper motive of the composition.

The relative importance of the various branches of art is founded upon the scale of nature in her gradations from lower to higher organizations. Hence, whatever belongs to animal wants or vulgar passions, to things in relation solely to their material uses and pleasures, like the prevalent tone of Dutch and Flemish art, is of the lowest order.

Higher in character ranks the landscape, and whatever the natural world exhibits of the love and wisdom of its Creator, and which may be portrayed from a sympathetic motive. There exists a correspondence between all matter and the divine principle whence it derives being. Hence, art has its choice of two views of its subject, viz., that which belongs to its uses, or external life, and that which, by spirit, connects it with the origin and ultimate purpose of its creation. An artist can therefore treat the landscape from either aspect, making his work high or common, according to its motive and execution.

Humanity is a still loftier topic of art. Whatever relates to man, in a social, historical, or religious aspect, belongs to high-art, inasmuch as man is the latest and loftiest development on earth of the Creator. This includes portraiture in its true significance, the rendering of the soul rather than the house it temporarily dwells in.



Above all, though rarely shown, and only in a finite degree, is the creative faculty, born of the imagination, and conceiving forms and expressions varying so widely from the known and visible that we term them supernatural, although, rightly considered, like the poet's inspiration and the prophet's revelation, they are the result of a power of vision not bestowed upon common sight.

Beauty, in a generic sense, is the result of a harmonious and subtle correspondence between motive and execution in art, suggestive of perfection. The primary attractiveness of color lies in its nice gradation, its hues melting into mystery and infinity, and bearing the same relation to it that curvature does to form. But beauty of the spirit requires a pure and lofty inspiration — right means to noble ends. The classical idea was based upon the sensuous and material. It sought that form of development which best enabled men to appreciate the delights of the external senses through a strong and elegant organization. The principle was correct, but it did not go far enough. It made earth and its enjoyments the ultimate of its aspirations. Christianity, in its protest against the sensual results of a law based upon so inferior a view of the soul, went to the opposite extreme, and sought its ultimate good through asceticism, which being equally founded on a false view of life, soon declined into artifice and ugliness. The truly beautiful is to be found in the æsthetic principle of Greek art, love of beauty for its own sake, vitalized by the gospel of Jesus, which, by implanting a moral significance and the seed of faith in all that rejoices the pure of heart, raises the feeling for the beautiful out of the mire of sense, and endows it with the loveliness of spirituality.

Let us briefly recapitulate the law of criticism.

First, Art, in Degree, is high or common, according to its subject, ascending from *genre*, decoration and illustration to the superior field of landscape; thence to portraiture, historical composition, and religious instruction, its loftiest range being the purely imaginative.

Secondly, in Quality, which is its minor excellence, and

rests upon naturalness, or correctness of design, truth of color, and harmony of composition; in short, on all that depends upon direct imitation of external nature.

Popular criticism seldom cares to penetrate beyond the range of eyesight. But the true magic of art lies in those intellectual elements which are born properly of the spirit. An insight into them, prompted by kindred feeling, and guided by a cultivated judgment, is the highest province of genius, and the severest test of art.

## PART III.

Authenticity, its Nature and Importance. Two Methods of Investigation. What is requisite for Nice Judgment. Pitfalls of Amateurs in Europe. Artifices, Trickery, and Fraud in Picture-dealing. Anecdotes of Prizes, Prices, and Collectors. Documentary Evidence. Fabrication, Falsification, and Repetitions of Originals. Uncertainty in regard to Early Masters. Fresco Painting. Difficulties of Collectors. Italian Legislation and Prohibitions. Revived Taste for Early Art. Restoration. Character of Local Criticism. Old Masters in America. Right Feeling for Art.

THERE is another branch of Criticism, beside that which may be said to relate to the character of art. It inquires into the origin, epoch, schools, and genealogy; and may be considered under the general term, Authenticity.

Not even with coin has forgery been more prolific and audacious than with art in general, the supply of imitable objects being always kept upon a level with the giratory demand of fashion. Hence, the authenticity of works of art becomes of primary consideration, and the mode of investigation, and means by which they are tested, a special study.

This sort of criticism subdivides into two varieties: viz., the technical method, and that which is founded upon a keen sympathy and appreciation of the motives and character of an artist. The former relies upon external evidence. It takes cognizance of material and manner, beginning, in painting, with the quality of the substance on which it rests, and proceeding to the preparations and uses of colors, peculiarities of design and manipulation; in fine, to those emphatic points of strength or weakness which form the sign-manual of artists, and disclose the difference between master, pupil, and imitator, and also between schools. For this investigation, a knowledge also of the chemical properties of the *vehicles* and varnishes used; of colors, and the methods of employing them; the scientific artifices of the profession, as well as chronological

information of the diversities of manner, idea, and materials. So extended a field, covering, in time, decades of centuries, and in external expression, a variety analogous to the kaleidoscopic mutations of intellect itself, in its continuous self-development, necessitates diligent and conscientious inquiry, and long experience, before sound opinions can be given. Even the antiquarianism of art must be studied. Characteristics apparently trivial and minute, often have an important bearing on doubtful points. The very worms which have preyed, ghoul-like, upon glorious art, become unchallengeable witnesses. Shreds of canvas, grains of wood, and qualities of plaster grounds, are not to be wantonly set aside. Every print of the tooth of time, and every peculiarity of the handicraft of man, each and all are to be closely scrutinized. The sands of age are to be nicely sifted for their hidden gold. Chemistry must be invoked to analyze and recombine. In short, criticism after this kind, honestly pursued, is an elaborate, cautious study.

Too rigidly followed, however, to the exclusion of the latter and more subtle method, it is apt to defeat its own end by inducing over-reliance upon what are often accidents, rather than essentials. Many artists, and to some extent, schools, from intimate connection and common experience, so practise each other's methods, that were a decision to be limited to vehicles and styles, there would be, not unseldom, a confounding of names. Therefore, to a knowledge of conducting technical investigation, it is essential to join the mysterious test of *feeling*; that which takes cognizance of the sentiment of an artist, his absolute individuality, by which he is *himself*, and none other; that which cannot be exchanged or imitated; the soul-power which defies alike his cleverest pupil and most unscrupulous imitator. To attain this quality of judgment, the critic must have an affinity for the motives and understanding of the artist as sensitive as the wire to the electrical current. Primarily, this nice discrimination is instinctive—felt and acted upon before the cautious questionings of reason are heard. Analyze it, however, and we find it as positive in

operation, and as obedient to law, as the action of acid on metal. Far from being a blind impulse, or a vagary of unordered taste, it is a guide to truth, a delicate chord which, fastening itself upon the surface of things, penetrates their interiors, and illumines them with the light of sympathetic understanding. Those who are obtuse to this faculty of testing character, are wont to deride it as sheer infatuation. Nevertheless, as a special gift, it does exist, at times disturbed by physical causes, often dormant, but when aroused, as reliable as pleasurable, and always suggestive of those surer and quicker means of knowledge which await the spiritualized existence of those who have diligently improved the talents committed to their charge in this.

Once, therefore, having recognized the artist through the general thought or feeling of his work, we are led on to hold converse with him by the outward manifestations of his mind, which become a language of symbols, expressive of the individual. Tones of color, styles of ornamentation, treatment of accessories, grace or vigor of design, the character of composition and motives, all contribute to the identification of the true, and the disclosure of the false objects. These principles of inquiry are applicable to all epochs, but in the great variety of shapes that art has assumed in three thousand years, it is scarcely possible for any one, however conscientious and diligent, to become a universal adept. The most, therefore, that the public should exact of a critic, is sound judgment on some special field of art, cautious also not to accept too implicitly the decisions of dogmatically enunciated criticism, which is very often but a dust of words raised to conceal either real ignorance or charlatan pretence.

As the taste for collecting objects of art is rapidly developing in America, it may be not without profit to point out some of the pitfalls which attend the amateur in their pursuit, especially in Italy, that exhaustless quarry of "originals," and "old masters." Though it should be remembered that a work of art may be both original and old, and very bad, too; its intrinsic worth being a distinct question from its age and authen-

ticity. The results given are drawn from an actual experience of many years.

The most obvious risk is from the counterfeiter. Not from the vulgar shams distributed so widely over the world from the well-known *manufactories* of paintings in France, England, and other parts, and which can deceive only the most ignorant or credulous, but from talent itself debased to forgery and trickery.

Many of the antique bronzes, terra-cottas, vases, classical and mediæval relics, so jealously cared for in the collections of Europe, are the clever imitations of a poor and honest artist in one of the Italian cities, whose miniature studio might almost be put inside of one of our old-fashioned omnibuses. His designs, taken from genuine antiques, are reproduced with fidelity, and the coatings and marks of time counterfeited by chemical processes and skilful manipulation. He sells his productions as imitations, at prices that barely provide him with daily bread, eking out a subsistence, by repairs and restorations, in which he is equally happy. Living in obscurity, without the capital or sagacity to make himself known to the public, he is at the mercy of those who are interested in keeping him in privacy, and buying his artistic labors at the wages of a clod-hopper. His own responsibility goes not beyond fulfilling orders for the imitation of certain objects, the process of which he frankly explains to an inquisitive visitor. But once in dishonest hands, antiquity and authenticity replace modernism and imitation. Falsehood and forgery now begin. There are two ways of seduction and deceit. The one, and safer for the operator, is the *suggestive*, in which appearances are made, by consummate tact and artful flattery, so to excite the imagination of the buyer, that he is led to believe what he desires without compromising the agent. The other is positive intrigue and absolute lying, so nicely done that the wealthy amateur is fleeced after a fashion that confers pleasure, and which, though he may subsequently detect, gives him but a lame chance at redress. In most instances he deserves none. For, stimulated by vanity or fashion, without any true regard



for art, he has offered so great a premium for a name, that it would indeed be wonderful if a corresponding supply was not created. Hence the apparent prolificness of certain names in art. The living artist is sometimes sorely tempted to pander to illusions, to secure that appreciation which the world gives more lavishly to fashion than merit. Michel Angelo tested this disposition, more current, even, at his time than now; though some say it was done without his knowledge. At all events, having finished a statue of a Sleeping Cupid, after breaking off an arm, it was buried, and, in due time, discovered, disinterred, and brought to the notice of a distinguished Roman dignitary, who pronounced it to be a gem of the antique. He bought it for a large price, well satisfied with his prize, as he had honest reason to be. But afterwards, the deception being exposed, and the proof given by means of the missing limb, that it was the work of the then almost unknown Florentine sculptor, the disenchanted connoisseur was furiously indignant, and disposed to take prompt vengeance upon the parties concerned.

To come back to our own day. Let us suppose a rich collector to have arrived at some well-known Italian locality,—picture-jockeying is much the same everywhere,—in pursuit of “originals.” Great is the commotion among dealers, and their “*sensali*,” or jackals. These latter are versed in intrigue and mystification, with enough intelligence to tell a good picture from a bad, and a parrot-like acquaintance of names and schools. They are of all classes, from the decayed gentleman and artist, to shop-keepers, cobblers, cooks, and tailors, who find, in the large commissions gained, a temptation to forsake their petty, legitimate callings for the lottery-like excitements and finesse of picture-dealing. No sooner has the stranger gone to his hotel, than a watch is put upon his movements, and bribery and cajolery used to get access to him. It is the *sensale’s* business to discover and offer pictures. He is supposed to know the locality of every one, good or bad, in his neighborhood. However jealous of each other, all are loyally pledged together to take in the stranger. Leagued with the dealer, artist, owner, courier, or servant, with every

one, in fact, that by any possibility, can stand between the buyer and his object, it has become almost an impossibility, especially for transient visitors, to purchase anything whatever without paying a heavy toll to intermediates. When the conspiracy is extended widely, the augmentation of price above what would be required in direct dealing with the owner, is sometimes double, or even quadruple. Occasionally, however, by way of compensation for their general evil, the "*sensali*" having scented a prize, offer it first to the amateur, in view of their own increase of gain over what the dealer would allow. In this way, good pictures not unfrequently escape the merchant, and reach the collector at a lower price than if they had gone directly to the former.

The *sensali* are not without their use in another respect. So indirect and underhanded is the Italian mode of dealing in these matters, and so eccentric their ideas as to value, that a foreigner is apt to be speedily disgusted, or driven away by the magnitude of demands which, in reality, the seller never expects, even in a remote degree, to realize. Hence, the negotiation is best done through an agent, the buyer having fixed upon *his* price, leaving the *sensale* to make what he can for himself. No purchaser, however, should give heed to any statement about the history or authenticity of the works offered to him through such sources, but rely, both for value and facts, upon his own resources; otherwise, he will be deceived to an extent that would almost appear fabulous to the inexperienced.

Such are the preliminary difficulties that beset the amateur. We will suppose him in connection with the sellers and trace his progress. First, the quality of his judgment and the impressibility of his imagination, are tested by a series of experiments as delicate as the atmospherical gauges of a barometer. He is, of course, not to be entrapped by copies and fabrications. He has a shrewd misgiving of dealers, and therefore prefers to buy family pictures, or originals direct from chapels and convents. All Italians have a patriotic pride in getting rid of trash at the expense of the foreigner. The more common

baits to entrap, by bringing pictures mysteriously boxed, grandly baptized, and liberally decorated with aristocratic seals, and eloquent with academical certificates, anointed with refined flattery and obsequious courtesy, having failed, his "Excellenza" being too knowing to be seduced into buying the ostentatiously furbished up "roba" of shops, they set about to accommodate him with originals from first hands. By substituting old frames for new, dirtying the pictures, and other ingenious processes, familiar to the initiated, and finally putting them out to board in noble villas, antique palaces, or other localities the most natural for good pictures to be *discovered* in, spiced with a tale of decayed family grandeur, other agents substituted and hints sagaciously conveyed to the buyer, his curiosity is excited, hopes raised, and finally, with much trouble and enhanced expense, he triumphantly carries off the very pictures which, in a shop, he could not be tempted to look at for fear of being caught with chaff, but which now, from a well-acted romance, have acquired a peculiar value in his eyes. Not that this sort of delicate mystification is reserved exclusively for foreigners, for we have detected, in an altar-piece borne away, as a great prize, by an Italian friend, from a secluded little chapel, attached to a noble villa in the vicinity of Florence, a worthless specimen of an old painter, from one of the several depositories of the city, which had long been unsalable on any terms.

Honest dealing exists in Italy, as elsewhere, and there are men whose statements may be safely received. But let the purchaser be cautious when led into out-of-the-way places to see newly-found originals, and be slow to give ear to stories of churches being permitted to sell this or that work of art because they have a façade to repair or an altar to decorate; and particularly, if there be anything said of an inheritance to divide, or a sad tale of family distress, requiring the sacrifice of long-cherished treasures, backed by a well-gotten up pantomime of unlockings and lockings, passages through mysterious corridors and vast halls, and cautious showings amid a crowd of family retainers, or a retinue of monks. Sometimes the most wary is

thus seduced into offering tenfold its worth for a common object, thus seen by a carefully arranged light, and artificial surroundings.

Many good pictures are still to be had in Italy, if properly approached by those who know thoroughly the habits of the country. There are, however, but two means of procuring them: either to pay their full value, as fixed by rival collectors, or to secure them, by fortuitous circumstances, for trifling sums. The extraordinary chances of discovery, and extreme variations of prices attending this pursuit, are curious and instructive. A few examples are worth relating.

In 1856, a small picture, by Niccolo d'Alunno, was sold in Florence by an artist to a dealer, for forty dollars; in a few weeks resold to an Englishman for five hundred dollars; exhibited at the Manchester Exhibition, whence it subsequently passed into the gallery of a distinguished personage, for two thousand five hundred dollars. The "Leda" of Leonardo, repainted, from motives of prudery, by the great-grandfather of Louis Philippe, was bought, at the sale of that ex-king's pictures, in Paris in 1849, for thirty dollars—restored to its primitive condition, and sold, as we are informed, for one hundred thousand francs. Ten years ago, "an angel," by the same artist, was found in the old-clothes market, at Florence, by an artist, bought for a few pence, cleaned, and sold to Prince Galitzin for twenty-two thousand francs. The "Fortune" of Michel Angelo, or what was supposed to be, not long since was discovered in the same locality, in a disastrous condition, secured for three shillings, put in such order as was possible, and parted with to a gentleman of Paris for three hundred dollars, and a pension of one dollar per day during the lives of the seller and his son. Quite recently, one of Correggio's most beautiful works was discovered under the canvas of a worthless picture, acquired at public auction, at Rome, for a few dimes, at the sale by a princely family, of discarded pictures, and resold by the fortunate discoverer for fifteen thousand dollars, although the original proprietor instituted a suit against him for its recovery, which however was decided

against the claim. In Florence, within three years past, a fine portrait by Titian, of the Doge Andrea Gritti, was picked out from a large lot of worthless canvases, for six dollars. The "Madonna del Gran Duco," at the Pitti, was bought, by the father of the late Grand Duke, with two other pictures, of a widow, for a few dollars. Instances like these might be multiplied to show that, in all times, "prizes" do strangely and unexpectedly occur, and that pictures, in their fortunes, resemble their authors, often passing from extreme poverty into princely homes.

The varied pecuniary estimation placed upon the same works in different epochs, is also curious. Indeed, a history of the *caprices* of art would be vastly entertaining. In 1740, at the sale, in Paris, of M. Crozet's collection, a drawing by Raphael brought only ten francs. The same drawing, at the sale of the King of Holland's gallery, in 1850, fetched fourteen thousand francs. For the "Ezekiel," Raphael, in 1510, received eight *scudi d'oro*, equivalent now to thirty dollars. At present, if sold, it would bring a fabulous sum. Within the memory of those now living, gold background pictures, of the schools of Giotto and his successors, owing to the contempt the pseudo-classical French taste had excited for them, were brought out of suppressed churches and convents, and publicly burned to obtain the trifling value of gold which remained in the ashes. Amateurs are now more inclined to pay their weight in gold for the few that have escaped the ravages of time and Vandalism, and the same government which permitted this destruction, in 1859, sequestering all in public buildings as national property, passed stringent decrees to prohibit their leaving the country.

But without cautious study and much well-paid-for experience, the stranger has small chance in successfully coping with the artifices that beset his every step. He must not only be well grounded in the history of Italian painting, but possess a practical knowledge of the execution of its various masters. Haste and ignorance, united to wealth and vanity, are a rich mine for the "sensali." To such collectors—not



to speak of Europe — America owes many of its galleries of great names, to the very natural astonishment and scepticism of the spectators, and the defamation of great reputations. Many of these purchases are the speculations of couriers, who, having artfully inoculated their employers with a taste for originals, take care to supply the demand, greatly to the benefit of their own pockets, and the gratitude of those with whom they bring their masters in connection. We have been called, by a countryman, to admire his gallery of Claudes, Poussins, Rembrandts, Murillos, and Titians, for which he had expended a princely sum, but which there was no difficulty, to one initiated, in recognizing as the sort of “roba,” got up expressly to entrap the unwary. One picture, worth, perhaps, for mere decoration, fifty dollars, had been secured with great joy by the buyer, and seeming reluctance of the seller, at the reduced price of two thousand two hundred dollars, that first asked being three thousand. Another, by a feeble artist of the Carlo Dolce school, had been converted, by a substitution of names, and sundry touchings up into a brilliant Guercino, at the cost of nearly one thousand dollars, of which the owner got about one third, the confederates pocketing the rest.

Some amateurs deceive themselves after a manner which acquits the dealer of any participation in their illusions. A gentleman entered a well-known studio at Florence, not many years back, and inquired the price of a picture. The reply was sixty dollars, and that it was by Furini. “I will take it,” the gentleman said, and eagerly insisted upon paying for it on the spot, which no sooner done, he turned round to the amused artist, and triumphantly exclaimed, “do you know you have sold me a Murillo for *nothing*?”

Benvenuto, President of the Academy of Florence, was once asked to attest the originality of an Andrea, brought to him by some speculators. “I should be gratified to oblige you, gentlemen,” he replied, “but unfortunately, I saw the picture painted.” Nevertheless, certificates were obtained from more facile authorities, and the picture officially baptized for a market.



Certificates and documents need to be received as cautiously as the pictures themselves ; perhaps more so, for they are more easily forged. When genuine, the former are valuable only as they are the opinions of honest and competent judges : both trustworthy only so far as they are attached to the pictures to which they legitimately belong. Genuine pictures have been sold and their documentary testimony kept for skilful imitations. We have even detected in certificates, the fraudulent substitution of names. And sometimes, when honestly given, their testimony is of no value. One professional certificate of the last century, in our possession, ascribes the portrait in question either to Masaccio, or Santo di Titi ; as sensible a decision as if an English critic had decided that a certain picture of his school was either by Hogarth, or Sir Thomas Lawrence. Cases are indeed rare, even in the public galleries, in which, outside of the picture itself, there is any trustworthy testimony as to its genealogy.

Counterfeits of old masters of the later Italian schools, supported by false evidence, have, at various times, deceived good judges, and obtained posts of honor in the galleries of Europe. Even when detected, their owners do not always repudiate their spurious treasures, but give their collections the benefit of doubts or public ignorance. The most noted imitator of this class was Micheli, of Florence. In view of his success, and the use, for a time, made of his works, he must be considered as a forger, though now they are in esteem solely for their intrinsic cleverness. Some still linger in remote galleries with the savor of authenticity about them. A Raphael of his make long graced the Imperial Gallery of Russia. He did not confine himself to literal repetitions, but concocted new "originals," by combining parts of various pictures, on worm-eaten panels or time-stained canvases, with such varieties of motive or design as their supposed authors would naturally have made in repeating their ideas in fresher combinations ; sometimes leaving portions unfinished, ingeniously dirtying their surfaces, and giving them that cracked porcelain appearance common to the old masters. One thus prepared was bought,

at his studio, for one hundred dollars ; consigned to a priest in the country ; in due time *discovered* ; and the rumor of a great master, in an exceedingly dirty and somewhat dilapidated state, but believed to be intact beneath the varnishes and grime of centuries, brought to the ears of a Russian, who, after a delicate and wearisome negotiation, obtained it for eight hundred dollars, and perhaps paid a few hundred more to the manufacturer for cleaning and restoring it.

Another sort of deception is the alteration of pictures by less known artists, of an inferior reputation, into more fashionable and profitable ones. In this manner, many works of artists, of much local interest, and often, indeed, of equal merit to those they are made to represent, are exterminated, to serious loss in the history of art. Lombardy, Umbria, and the Legations, especially, have suffered in this respect.

Though no deception be intended, if pedigrees are lost, criticism is often sorely perplexed to decide upon authorship. Out of the multitudes of pictures in the European galleries, which are so decisively baptized in catalogues, the public would be surprised to learn how few, comparatively, can be historically traced to their authors. The majority are named upon the authority of local judges, whose acquaintance with art may be limited to one specialty, or who rely upon such opinions as can be gathered from the best available sources. Hence the frequent changes in the nomenclatures. We cannot, therefore, accept such documents as infallible, except in those cases whose internal evidence and historic record are alike unimpeachable.

The difficulty of deciding often arises from repetitions, and the excellencies of pupils painting from the designs of their masters, and not unfrequently assisted by them. As we go back in art, this difficulty increases, from the oblivion which has overtaken once well-known names, and from the greater uniformity of processes and more limited range of motives of the earliest artists.

The great religious masters of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries gathered about them crowds of scholars, who trav-

elled with them from city to city, partaking in their commissions, and executing their designs, especially of *ex voto* pictures, multiplied, in that age, by the piety of noble families, to commemorate some particular interposition of divine power in their behalf, and to honor their patron saint. Their usual compositions were the Madonna enthroned with the infant Jesus in her arms, surrounded by holy personages, or angels, with the portraits of those who ordered the paintings, generally of diminutive size, to express humility, and kneeling in adoration, with clasped hands and upraised eyes. Unless the characteristics of the master-hand are unmistakable in this class of works, they are to be ranked as of the schools of the great men whose general features they bear. And it must not be forgotten that, frequently, pupils developed into distinguished masters themselves. Taddeo Gaddi and Puccio Capanna worked under Giotto, while he lived, and afterwards acquired distinction in an independent career.

The favorite field of the early masters was fresco painting. Unlike painting in oils, it has no resources of transparency, brilliancy, and richness of coloring, but depends, for its nobility of effect, upon the hardier virtues of art, and the more robust genius of the artist. His success lies in strong and eloquent design and invention, with but comparatively feeble aid from color. Fresco and tempera paintings were chiefly intended for the interior of sacred or public edifices, whose dim light harmonized their more or less crude and positive tones. It was, however, only through the breadth and freedom of wall-painting that the ambition of the early masters was fully aroused, and their powers found ample scope. Out of it they created a world of art unknown and unappreciable to those who cannot view it as it exists in the consecrated localities, and amid the solemn associations whence it originated. All over Italy, by the road-side, and in the sanctuary, there is untold treasure of their art, pure, grand, or quaint, telling truth with the earnestness of conviction, and diffusing beauty through aroused feeling and refined sentiment, overflowing with virgin power, and exalted efforts — everywhere untransportable, often

in localities untrodden except by the feet of the stolid peasant, or the heavy-jawed monk, seen only by enthusiastic seekers, are these monuments of a noble art, once more being awakened into vital existence by the piety and taste of a generation whose great joy it is to uncover and restore to the light of day those precious remains which have been so often barbarously white-washed by the clergy of the two past centuries, from no better motive than to give greater light to their churches. Especially in Tuscany, the souvenirs of ancestral greatness are now cared for with a zealous patriotism, honorable alike to the feeling and knowledge of its population. The chief desire of the inhabitants is to reinvest the monuments of the republic with the character and aspect which best recall their olden freedom and enterprise. And the highest glory that can be bestowed upon these monuments is their literal conservation and restoration, as they originally were built; nothing being added or taken away except to their loss.

Not only patriotism, but selfish acquisition demands of Italy the strict conservation of her art. Monuments like hers are funds at interest for posterity. Until her new era of prosperity has fairly begun, her livelihood depends, in no small degree, upon her artistic attractions. Nowhere is there a livelier feeling for artistic beauty, greater respect for the past, and a wider spread knowledge of art. In all times will other peoples come within her borders to enjoy and study that which she can still so lavishly bestow.

Tourists roundly rate Italians for their sordid indifference to their art, attributing to the people at large the spirit of the mercenary or ignorant few with whom they are most in contact. It is true that others may hear, as we have heard from a noble marquis, in reply to a question about his family pictures, "Ask my major-domo, he may know — had your query been about horses, I could have told you," — they will also see those who should be above such meanness playing the part of low dealers, and perhaps receive propositions to buy works of art robbed from public places. But such instances are uncommon. Even the spirited deportment of the Signo-

rina Borgherini, as told by Vasari, to a dealer who attempted, during the siege of Florence, to get possession of certain paintings belonging to her husband, for the purpose of sending them, on speculation, to the King of France, may still find its counterpart, in feeling, if not in action, among some of the present daughters of that city. "How then," she exclaimed, "dost thou, — Giovanni Battista, thou vile broker of frippery, miserable huckster of farthings, — dost thou presume to come hither with the intent to lay thy fingers on the ornaments which belong to the chambers of gentlemen ; despoiling, as thou hast long done, and art ever doing, our city of her fairest ornaments, to embellish strange lands therewith? I prize these pictures from reverence to the memory of my father-in-law, from whom I had them, and from the love I bear to my husband ; I mean to defend them, while I have life, with my own blood. Away with you, then, base creature of nothingness ! If again thou shouldst be so bold as to come on a similar errand to this house, thou shalt be taught what is the respect due to the dwelling of a gentleman, and that to thy serious discomfort ; make sure of it." And so she drove the intriguing bargainer away, with "reproaches of such intolerable bitterness that the like had never before been hurled at man alive." Be it remembered, too, that Vasari was a good judge of the quality of a Florentine dame's scolding, for he had, in his younger days, passed an ignoble apprenticeship under the weight of Lucrezia Fede's tongue.

A like close relation between master and scholar, the effect of which was to multiply works by joint labor, obtained among the contemporaries of Raphael, as well as of Giotto. The precise number of the genuine works of Raphael, owing to the cleverness of many of his pupils, will perhaps never be known. Coindet says there exist by him one hundred and eighty to two hundred Holy Families alone. Some writers compute the number of his works at from five hundred to six hundred — others even quote twelve hundred as authentic. These exaggerated estimates only prove how extremely popular his designs became, and the great number of pictures ordered



from them, some of which, no doubt, had the advantage of being touched by his hand, while all, in some way or other, bear his mental impress. Moreover, the great masters frequently changed their methods and styles, so that one might be mistaken for another. They also studied and even copied each other. Andrea del Sarto's copy of Leo X. by Raphael, passed undetected even by Julio Romano, who had himself worked on the latter. Rubens and Velasquez imitated the greatest Italian masters, particularly Paul Veronese and Titian; the Carracci and their school multiplied Correggios, Raphaels, and the chief Venetians; Girolamo da Carpi, of Ferrara, the same; and all with a degree of success that has greatly perplexed later generations; their own works, in turn, as they became popular, experiencing from subsequent artists the same process of multiplication. Of the celebrated Madonna of Loretto there are not fewer than ten rival claimants for authenticity; while sketches, studies, and works, not directly imitated from, but partaking of the character of, great artists, often clever enough to be confounded with their undoubted works, are not rare. Portraits in particular, being direct studies from nature, are difficult to decide upon. Hence it is that criticism is so variable in its decisions.

Beside the above sources of perplexity, it encounters another obstacle from the restorations pictures have undergone. Injured by time or obscured by repeated varnishings, they often require some degree of cleaning to make them intelligible. Unfortunately, in most examples the process is sheer assassination. Many of the best works of the public galleries have been subjected to scrubblings more analogous to the labors of the wash-tub, than to the delicate and scientific treatment requisite to preserve intact the virgin surface of a painting. Mechanical operators have passed over them with as little remorse as locusts blight fields of grain. Their rude hands, in numberless instances, have skinned the pictures, obliterating those peerless tints, lights and shadows, and those delicate but emphatic touches that bespeak the master-stroke, leaving, instead, cold, blank, hard surfaces and outlines, opaque shadows



and crude coloring, out of tone, and in consequence with deteriorated sentiment as well as execution. The profound knowledge and vigorous or fairy-like handling, which made their primary reputation, are now forever gone, leaving little behind them, except the composition, to sustain it in competition with modern work. As bad, however, as is this wanton injury, that of repainting is greater. Inadequate to replace the delicate work he has rubbed off, the restorer, to harmonize the whole and make it look fresh and new, passes his own brush over the entire picture, and thus finally obscures whatever of technical originality there might have still been perceived after the cleaning. The extent of injury European galleries have thus received is incalculable. One instance will suffice as an example of many. Some years gone by, the beautiful *Bella Donna* of Titian, at the Pitti, was intact. Unluckily, it went into the hands of a professional cleaner. A celebrated dealer happened to be in the hall when it was rehung. Looking at it, he exclaimed, "Two weeks ago I would have given the Grand Duke two thousand pounds for that picture on speculation — now, by —, I would not give twenty pounds."

Each restoration displaces more of the original, and replaces it by the restorer. As the same hands generally have a monopoly of a public gallery, the contents of some are beginning to acquire a strange uniformity of external character, while the old masters are in the same degree vanishing from them. These remarks, however, are more applicable to past than to present systems, for a reform, founded on true artistic principles, is everywhere beginning.

Oil paintings gradually darken in tone, while tempera, if protected from humidity, retain their brilliancy and clearness as long as the material on which they rest endures. The true occupation of the restorer is to put the work given to him in a condition as near as possible to its original state, carefully abstaining from obliterating the legitimate marks of age, and limiting himself to just what is sufficient for the actual conservation of the picture. One of the chief needs of many old pictures is the removal of subsequent repaintings. This

done, in general, the less added the better, unless, if a piece be wanting, it can be so harmonized with the original as to escape observation. But this is a special art, and to be done only by those acquainted with the old methods. In perfect condition ancient paintings cannot be. We must receive them for what they are, with the corrodings and changes of time upon them. How interesting, in this respect, is the Sienese gallery! Here the restorer has been stayed, and we find the pictures genuine as time itself, and more precious by far to the student than the most glaring and "refreshed" surfaces of a multitude of works in other galleries which are the wonder and admiration of superficial observers.

The greatest difficulty of the restorer is to harmonize *permanently* the new vehicles with the old, for the fresh tints are always liable to assume a different tone from the original, which have already undergone the changes of time. It may be said that the skill which can escape detection in restoration, is adequate to successfully counterfeit. This is true only in part, for to *mend* is very different from to *create*. Instances, however, do occur, of such attempts, but they seldom long escape detection, and never impose upon those who have experience in the arts of the restorer. Several years ago, a Roman artist successfully for a while passed off his imitations of Claude and Salvator Rosa as originals, at large prices, with the usual guaranties of authenticity. To disarm suspicion, he was accustomed to allow himself to be seen at work only upon cheap, vulgar pictures, pretending that he was competent to nothing better. Having sold one of his Claudes for four thousand dollars, the trick was detected, and being threatened with public prosecution, the fear of it brought on his death.

Criticism is too often local in its tone, being pledged, as it were, to the admiration of its favorite subjects, and a corresponding disregard of those with which it is not so familiar. Particularly in Italy, where the municipal feeling has been so strong, the partisans of each school were greatly prejudiced. Each people, also, very naturally prefers its own to another's art, and does not always question its motives of preference.

The Florentines have overlooked the merits of their rivals, the Venetians and Sieneſe, who in turn have reciprocated : while Italy as a whole has had little regard for the works of other nations. England has been ſlow to recognize the great merits of the ſouthern ſchools, and France and Germany are equally in the bondage of local taſtes or tranſitory faſhions. But true criticism is cosmopolitan. It teſts merit according to the ſtandard of its motive, not overlooking excellence in any reſpect or degree. A truly catholic view of art is the reſult only of its univerſal ſtudy. The critic may be juſt to all inſpirations, and yet enjoy his own preferences. But as Blackwood obſerves, too many “are ſelf-endowed with the capacity to judge all matters relating to the fine arts juſt in proportion to the extent of their ignorance, becauſe it is not difficult to condemn in general terms, and to attain notoriety by ſhallow pretence.” “Neither the narrowneſs of ſect nor the noiſe of party” ſhould be heard in this matter. As a great gallery ſhould represent all phaſes of art, through their ſeveral ſtages of progreſs and decay, meeting all wants and taſtes, ſo criticism ſhould be founded on equally as broad a foundation. Not proud of its erudition nor dictatorial, but with due humility uttering its opinions, prompt to ſuſtain them, and yet ever ready to liſten and learn.

“Old maſters” are almoſt a byword of doubt or contempt in America, owing to the influx of cheap copies and pseudo-originals, of no artistic value whatever. It is the more important, therefore, that they ſhould be fairly represented among us, by ſuch characteristic ſpecimens as are ſtill to be procured. Some modern artiſts are jealous of, or indifferent to, paſt genius, and ſedulouſly diſparage it in view of their own immediate intereſts. Bayle St. John, in his “Louvre,” relates that he heard an Associate of the Royal Academy “deliberately and energetically declare that if it were in his power he would ſlaſh with his knife all the works of the old maſters, and thus compel people to buy modern.” This ſpirit is both ungenerous and impolitic. If neither reſpect nor care for the works of departed talent be beſtowed, what future has

the living talent itself to look forward to? Art is best nourished by a general diffusion of æsthetic feeling and taste. There can be no invidious rivalry between the dead and living. Alfred Tennyson looks not with evil eye upon John Milton. Why should a modern be jealous of a mediæval artist? They are all the brethren of a lofty career. The public can love and appreciate both. Nor should it be forgotten that it is precisely in those countries where old art is most appreciated that the modern is most liberally sustained.

# ART-STUDIES.

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## CHAPTER I.

Psychological Origin of Art. Its Functions. The two great Cycles of Progress, Paganism and Christianity. Ideas and Character of each. In what the Superiority of either one lies. Results of ultimate Triumph of the latter. Reaction of Protestantism upon Catholicism in Art. Pagan and Papal Mythology. Necessity of Humanity for a personal Deity. Olympus and the new Jerusalem. Jupiter and "Our Father." Pagan Hades and Christian Hell. Heathen Philosophy less efficacious for Salvation than Christ's Gospel. Why. Paganism the Forerunner of Christianity. No Sect, Race, or School monopolizes Truth and Beauty. The Facts of Catholicism, good or bad in its Sphere of Faith and Practice, in Relation to Art. Final Comparison between Christian and Greek Art.

ART is coeval with Mind. Its origin is dimly seen in the realms of myth, struggling into being contemporaneous with civilization itself. As soon as the human intellect became active and self-developing, slowly learning to unfold its varied gifts, feeling prompted it to executive expression. The creative faculty implanted in man by Divinity, inspired by fancy and imagination, could not idly fold its hands in passive content with the gratuitous beauties of the natural world, but was impelled into rivalry with it; venting its inherent sentiment and force in making the earth more attractive as a dwelling-place, and interpreting to the senses, by sensuous imagery and spiritual symbolism, the language of other spheres. As mankind grew to be refined and cultivated, art became universal and exalted;

not equal in intensity and diffusion among all races, for circumstances of climate, locality, and necessity have always influenced its manifestations, while its æsthetic spirit has often been repressed by bigotry, or debased by superstition. Still, if at times the religious sentiment has been its worst foe, it has also shone as its loftiest inspiration, prompting it to the apotheosis of thought and feeling, and, by its suggestive beauty, lifting the soul above vulgar Struggle and carnal Pleasure.

In this last office it assumes the position of Teacher. While mind is confined by its present physical organization, securing its natural food by the aid of tangible means, art is of necessity one of the most efficacious agents of its growth and refinement. Especially is it eloquent in pointing out the correspondence between the seen and those superior conditions of soul-being, whose refinements of form and color are beyond the cognizance of our material senses. In this shape it speaks by Suggestion. Devotion tinges its idealizations, and imparts to it the evidence of faith. The religious idea becomes its ruling sentiment; its expression, the interpretation of the soul.

Art has, however, important functions beside religious homage and aspiration. It is also the scribe of history. Descriptive, narrative, conservative, and illustrative, nature and fact are its domain, and every passion, thought, and feeling its fuel. But all this is secondary to its prophetic mission; while of yet inferior importance and more universal application is its province of Pleaser, which includes beauty in the exclusive sense of adornment, or that æsthetic expression which is intended to gratify the ear and eye, and charm the taste, without higher motive than sensuous enjoyment. Our present purpose is to explain and illustrate the highest functions of art, contrasting



briefly its two greatest developments; the one under the Pagan, the other under the Christian, dispensation.

The history of Art may be divided into two great cycles, in each of which Worship has been the vital principle. As soon as men could paint or carve, they fashioned unto themselves images for adoration. All other forms of art — whether historical, ornamental, or sensual, as among the ancients, or domestic, descriptive, fanciful, or illustrative, as in landscape-art with the moderns — are offshoots from the great fundamental idea which first inspired art, and which gave it an impetus that, in both eras, carried it forward to the utmost development it was capable of receiving in sentiment from the quality of the religious thought of either epoch, and in execution from the knowledge of material and skill in its use. The reaction from the exaggeration of that idea, or rather the restricted use made of it, in both periods it being gradually degraded to the service of superstition and despotism, led, in each instance, to like results. First we had rude art, pure in inspiration and symbolic in meaning, but in popular influence tending to fetichism. Secondly, as civilization advanced, art, still subjected to the religious idea, took a broader development under the laws of beauty, looking to nature for instruction. Mind being essentially free in both these periods, art speedily assumed its loftiest elevation, greatest variety, and finest execution. Then, as the wheel of progress slowly revolved, the cycle of thought, which in either case art represented, began its downward turn, losing itself, in each, in national sensualism, infidelity, and political degradation. Grecian art, which was the highest type of pagan civilization, embodying the Sensuous principle of life, illustrates the rise and fall of the first cycle. Catholic art, as it rose from the débris of the classical,

based itself upon the opposite view, or the Ascetic, which became the dominant sentiment. Enjoyment was the great desire of the one, expiation the aim of the other. By the retributive action of nature's offended laws, which, forbidding the sacrifice of one portion of its being to another, demand normal employment and enjoyment alike for all its faculties, the psychological injury thus done to humanity, though under influences so diverse in character, produced like results. In both, the sensual gradually overcame the spiritual principle. Art having exhausted its one-sided mission, and developed the ruling sentiment to its utmost limits, nothing remained but for it to follow the reactionary bias of human nature, which drew it into the service of its lusts. This crisis of its existence passed, its downward march was rapid. The revolution of Catholic art may thus be briefly traced. At first, pure, simple, rude, and symbolical, as its germ took root in the catacombs of Rome; then, amid a checkered career, iconoclasm fighting strenuously against idolatry, for many centuries under Byzantine forms scarcely rising in influence above fetichism; afterwards, purified and reinvigorated by the awakened mind of Europe, it rose to its loftiest flight in mediæval effort; and finally, as free communities were absorbed by the progress of despotic centralization, pride, luxury, and sensuality invaded art, and, aided by selfish power and corrupt learning, soon emasculated it of all purity and nobility, reducing it to a mere pander to prince and prelate. Its last condition was worse than that of fetichism; that at least was sincere, and founded on faith, unenlightened though it was. But its debasement was that of a courtesan, defiled by its own adornments, and prostituted to every caprice and vile passion. Inane, tricky, and extravagant, the Catholic art of this period is a mean sham. Its

descent may be measured by the distance between Fra Angelico and Carlo Dolce, Michel Angelo and Bernini. We do not say there was no talent in this decadence. There was much and varied. The eclectic schools evince this. Great names adorn them, and intellect without feeling, or feeling without knowledge, sometimes performed comparative wonders. They were ablest in the sphere of revived classicalism. Their inspiration was from pagan, and not catholic Rome. Hence they, the more readily, fell in with the kindred tastes of the rulers of their age. Christian faith, if not the forms, was more or less effete. Atheism was rife in the holy mother church. Protestantism fiercely assaulted it from without. Between the two, the art that had so glorified it in its day of earnest belief fled forever from it.

We do not believe in the resuscitation of any forms of knowledge and faith, when once their climacteric is passed, and their course is downward. It seems foreign to the scheme of nature. Her vital principles remain ever the same. Love, faith, hope, and fear, the elements of religion, are always active in the human heart. But the shapes they assume in art depend upon their degree and quality of quickening grace. Catholic art, in its mediæval character, will no more revive than will the art of Nineveh or Egypt. It will linger long amongst us, withering slowly away from the roots, as the new phase, based upon the freer principles of Protestantism, grows apace. From the past we may gain instruction for the present. Hence the importance of properly investigating and preserving that art which looms upon us so grandly from the mists of a theology fast losing its hold in the hearts of men. It may be very long before its dogmas and ceremonies pass as completely away as those of heathen Greece and Rome,

but the time is fast ripening for new and more spiritual views of the teachings of Jesus. Christianity is destined finally to supersede sectarianism. Love will replace Fear. Then asceticism, no longer known in life or faith, will moulder away with the dead sensualism of Paganism.

Christianity did not at once fix itself in the world in the full intent of its author. He correctly comprehended humanity in all its bearings and duties, present and future, and was himself a lover of beauty, enjoying sensuous life, eating and drinking, refreshing his soul with friendships, and his senses with the joys of creation. But as his disciples multiplied and became more remote from him, the sad, withering doctrine of asceticism, at first simply a stern protest against the vices of decrepit heathenism, but soon exalted to the measure of faith, stifling the generous currents of life, became the law of Christianity. Out of it arose that controlling sentiment in art, painful and discordant, making of existence a wearisome physical penance instead of a spiritual joy, diversified by rare but golden gleams of future paradisiacal reward, which was the general artistic inspiration through the long Byzantine period to the days of Giotto and his successors, until Masaccio and his followers bestowed upon it new expressions, borrowed more directly from secular history and the natural world.

Just criticism is impartial and universal. It has two errors to avoid: one, the bias of the individual to exaggerate the importance, in relation to the whole, of any special sentiment or method in warm accordance with his personal instincts; the other, the tendency to narrow the judgment to the standard of the conventional theology which forms the groundwork of every strictly religious education. For the former impulse allowance is easily made, as its action is ingenuous and earnest. A predilec-

tion for color over form, or the reverse ; for one school more than another ; or one quality of sentiment, the sensuous over the ascetic, the severe over the cheerful, the superficial over the profound ; or any shade of difference that marks one individualism from another, is sympathetic and intelligible. Our own promptings suggest the measure whereby to judge of those of others ; which in turn recoil upon us, and force an appeal to impartial reason on behalf of merit on its own grounds. But to void the mind of the effects of a sectarian training, so as to look upon art, be it of India, Etruria, the Rome of the Cæsars or of the Popes, with the equal eye of justice, sympathizing with and detecting beauty and truth under any guise, however foreign to the ideas forced upon our youth, is indeed difficult. Unless the critic can arrive at this impartiality, he is liable, like Winckelmann and Goethe, to decide wholly under the influences of classicalism, or, like Rio, Montalembert, and the Dominican Marchese, to see facts and motives solely through the medium of Catholic theology ; or, if a fanatical Protestant, to write under a holy horror of both.

Before reviewing the rise and fall of that branch of painting which had its origin and development directly from primitive Christianity, it is expedient to point out the fundamental distinctions between it and the art of Greece and Rome, to which it succeeded as a destroying conqueror.

The superiority of classical art lay in its execution. While it remained the simple expression of sacred dogmas, controlled by priestcraft, it was as narrow and rude as the early Catholic art. Freed by philosophy, and inspired by the poetical element of the Grecian mind, it chose sensuous beauty as its model, and the earth as its basis of action and faith. Its supernatural field was feeble and undefined.



Olympus was but a lofty mountain, and its divinities, not even the spirits of "just men made perfect," but fanciful embodiments, in human and animal forms, of the elements of the natural world. Fertile imaginations created shapes symbolical of the hidden forces of air, earth, and water, and peopled those realms with multitudinous beings, whose images were adored, first from fear, and afterwards as the protective, sympathizing, executive agencies of still higher powers. Even these were but men with the passions of humanity. Classical mythology gave birth to no martyrdoms for sacred principles ; no lofty virtues ; no self-denying, ecstatic saints, or prophetic-tongued men. Instead, it was prolific in rapes, wars, thefts, revellings, and revenge. Its character is indicative of a low moral standard, such as everywhere prevailed, among the chosen people of Jehovah, equally with others, in the infancy of our race. Jupiter and Juno, Venus and Vulcan, Mercury and Minerva, are the imperfect beings of earth, heroic only in greater power, more beauty, profounder wisdom, and larger physical development, capable of more acute sensuous enjoyment and suffering, louder laughter and bitterer wailing. Their hearts were filled to the brim with lusts and vices. They were vain, boastful, jealous, treacherous, and tricky ; never in harmony among themselves, or at unity in regard to mankind. In short, in its philosophic estate, pagan mythology was nothing more elevated than the embodiment in beautiful forms and poetical expression of the sentiments of pantheism ; in its purest conditions, the action of those dim instincts of divine truths that penetrate the hearts of exceptional men in all ages ; in its commonest, the myths and secrets of nature sensualized and degraded to the vulgar comprehension ; a chaos of conflicting forces, without a positive, central Oneness. Instead, a multitude of de-



ified men and women, whose translation from earth to heaven, far from purifying their souls, had invested them with organizations capable of greater intensity of lust and selfishness than was common to their primal conditions, though, at times, not without godlike attributes according to pagan comprehension. Art inspired from such a religion could not rise above its moral level. We find, therefore, its subjects all drawn from human powers and actions, subordinated to the laws of physical and intellectual beauty, which were detected and practised with a sagacity in accommodating means to ends never since surpassed. These laws relate chiefly to human and animal form and architecture. Consequently, in asserting the superiority of Grecian over modern art in execution, it is limited to its own chosen province. Proportion, combination, adaptation, symmetry, repose, grace ; the interweaving of instinctive action, or the chosen idea, into shapes that express each in its highest conditions of character and beauty, with the fittingest adjustment of the subordinate parts, into a harmonious Unity : such were the chief excellences of this art to which moderns owe so much, although it is known only in fragmentary sculpture, mosaic or fresco compositions, and the disinterred wealth of domestic life. All these objects betray the ruling passion for sensuous Beauty. Often obscene, oftener unchaste, sometimes pure and grand beyond description, severe or lovely according to the animating idea, adorning the grandest edifices and descending to the meanest utensils ; in temple, palace, forum, and house, not disdaining the commonest offices ; everywhere utility subordinate to art, we find among the ancients evidences of their predominant sentiment, even in the gloom of the tomb itself.

When the followers of the Galilean obtained their final

victory over paganism, their fiercest retribution was vented upon the images and associated arts of the divinities, for denying whose worship they had passed through so much tribulation and martyrdom. Theirs had been a bloody, fiery track, from the catacombs to the golden house of the Cæsars. Connected with all their past agonies, and prohibited by the spirit of their Gospel, were those still eloquent witnesses to the former domination of the kingdom of Satan. The more beautiful the art, the more dangerous to their souls. Beauty had long ago lapsed into sensuality; faith into infidelity. Hard and fiercely did polytheism buffet the incoming tide of monotheism. But in vain. The Power that had permitted its phase of religion had now signalled its doom. To other dogmas and a more spiritualized faith had been intrusted the religious destinies of mankind. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Jehovah's fiat had entered into the hearts of zealots. It was accepted as the new dispensation in its literalest sense. Iconoclasm for a while ran riot. With the abolition of pagan rites, pagan art was destroyed also. True, that in the gradual decadence of the moral and political power of paganism in the three centuries preceding the absolute triumph of Christianity by the edicts of Constantine, art had correspondingly declined from its pure Grecian standard, and was rapidly being undermined by its own leaven of decay. But the thing itself now being abhorred, force was added to corruption. Gregory I., pope and saint, is accused of having burnt the Palatine library and thrown the most precious works of antiquity into the Tiber. Even if he can personally be exonerated from this charge, as some Catholic writers fain believe, we have had sufficient examples of the bigotry of Protestant fanatics nearer our own time, easily

to imagine the scenes that must have been enacted throughout the Roman empire, after temples, statues, and paintings were doomed to destruction on religious grounds. Alas! there had been much provocation. Precious blood had flowed in torrents to sustain false altars, and precious souls had become sensualized by their atmosphere. Souls lost for them! Down, down with every seduction! Upon them, axe and fagot! Grind to dust, and scatter to the winds of heaven! Idolatry was the watchword of their ruin. So, amid fire, blows, and controversial hate, the priests of Jupiter were despoiled of their vocation, and everything associated with their rites either purged to new uses or utterly destroyed. How could it have been otherwise than that classical art, under the double pressure of its own debasement and the assaults of monotheism, should have passed completely away from the memories of man? It survived only in sepulchres, or was buried under its own foundations, to be slowly disinterred in more enlightened times for our instruction.

Papal Rome, like imperial Rome, sustaining herself by the sword, has in turn undergone what she meted to others. Her art, though purer than that she destroyed, could not be saved from desolation, after she had debased it to fraud, idolatry, and persecution. In 1645, the English parliament ordered all pictures belonging to the nation having Christ represented upon them to be publicly burned, and everything connected with the "papal superstition" given over to destruction. An exception was made for pictures of the Virgin, intended solely for art. These—one would think by a species of sardonic pleasantry—were permitted to be sold for the benefit of the poor Irish.

Wherever protestantism triumphed in the fifteenth and

sixteenth centuries, the crucifix, the long-venerated images of saints, holy utensils, even the sacred edifices themselves, experienced the same ruthless fate from its bigotry that classical art had received ten centuries before from papacy. Had the victory of the former been as complete and universal as that of the latter, Catholic art would have survived to us only as that of Greece, in mutilated remains. It is now fast becoming a souvenir of the Past, under the more peaceful and permanent progress, which the freer spirit of protestantism is gradually working out in the social and political destinies of the earth. Consequently, it is the more necessary that we should comprehend its character, and piously conserve whatever of it is left to us.

The superiority of Catholic to classical art lies in its *motive*. Inferior to it in abstract beauty and excellence of composition, it rose far above it in the quality of its inspiration and its range of topics. Classical art limited itself to the strictly possible. It did not soar above the idealization of the actual, except so far as a poetical fancy inspired it. The beauty it coveted was that of Apollo and Venus; incarnations of life, light, and joy. To the Greeks, the earth was a delectable abode; life, a good gift; enjoyment its object, and the gods sympathized with them. They were content to be men. Faith carried them not beyond a sensuous horizon. They dared to eat, drink, and be merry; to offer libations to jolly divinities, believing that they likewise delighted in emotions and passions like their own, shutting their eyes meanwhile to the quicksand of sensuality that yawned beneath their feet.

Catholic art, yearning for spiritualities, quickened by a divine faith, overlooked earth, and fixed its ecstatic gaze upon heaven. It strove after the impossible. The divinities of Greece were expressible in material. Brush and

chisel could create them from human models. Not so with Jehovah, the unrepresentable and unspeakable. His Olympus was Infinity; his being, Eternity; the home of his chosen, the new Jerusalem. His ministering spirits, supernatural. Angels and archangels, seraphs and cherubs, the mystic Three in One; glories too intense for mortal sight; the spiritual SUBLIME, comprehending all Beauty, all Truth, all Love; the Future of disembodied man, for weal or woe: such was the range of Catholic art. What wonder that, compared with what it sought to embody, it was less successful than that of heathendom. In its very failure we have the evidence of its spiritual greatness. Going to the opposite extreme of the Greeks, it shattered beauty and wrecked happiness upon the shoals of asceticism. Earth was not to it a pleasant, enjoyable abode; a sphere of self-development; the preliminary step to a higher grade of existence. But it was a monstrous pit-fall. Faith pictured it as a temptation and penance. Hell lay beneath, separated only by a thin crust. Each moment was pregnant with eternal torments. Every instinct and earthly blessing had its Satanic side. Sin coursed through each vein and salivated every nerve. Natural desires and necessities were to be dreaded and strangled. In fine, human nature was not only made deceitful and dangerous above all things, but physical, never-ending agonies, from which the untutored imagination recoiled in horror, prepared for all mankind, not accepting or not knowing the formula of salvation prescribed by the Church. The sublime, simple, and intelligible doctrines of Jesus were metamorphosed into a mystical science, and the keys of heaven and hell confided to priestcraft. A new mythology gradually grew into existence, with its traditions, facts, devils, and divinities, corresponding to every grade and



variety of defunct paganism. Instead of incarnated elements and agencies of the natural world, with their poetical halo of myths and legends, and their beauteous forms, Catholic art had the more difficult and less pleasing task of making representable and adorable abstract, mystical dogmas; in fact, to recreate that necessity of unenlightened man in all ages, material images which should represent his ideas of God, heaven, and hell.

Catholicism, therefore, seduced by that instinct, more imperious in some races than others, for external objects by which to kindle its faith, speedily developed a mythology, not, indeed, as copious as that of Greece, but based upon the same general principles of idealization and incarnation. Personality, it would appear, is absolutely essential to the popular comprehension of Divinity. Among Protestants, this doctrine is universally received, though, interpreting the second commandment of Sinai in its most obvious sense, they do not make to themselves "graven images in the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth," "to bow down to them, and worship them." Not so, however, do the more imaginative southern races understand the "jealousy" of "the Lord their God." They multiply his images, and personify his attributes, that they may bodily worship them. There is a holy instinct in the heart, which makes it thrill to truths and virtues so pure and exalted as to seem above the reach, though not beyond the hope, of humanity. Such fire its impulses, and keep alive its faith in perfection. If the Greeks and Romans of old sought to embody their highest conceptions of deity in forms of sensuous beauty, what marvel that their descendants should have continued the practice, infusing into their new creations the holier inspirations of Christianity?



The Thunderer, Jupiter, was replaced by God, the Father. His banquetings, and his amorous escapades to earth, with the dubious doings of his kindred crew, whether as fables, the personifications of natural phenomena, or the actualities which the pagan heart lusted for in its idea of heaven, were superseded by the mystical Trinity, with its doctrines of atonement, and purification by the Holy Spirit, sent direct to each craving sinner's soul. Sensuality was swept clean away by the new theology. Sackcloth and ashes, the agonies and solemn passion of Christ, the supernatural darkness and horror of the Crucifixion, the fearful disclosures of eternal torments, the martyrdoms, buffetings, and ultimate triumphs of the new religion, with its abasement of sense to spirit, gradually drove the more seductive scenes of pagan celestialities from human memories. The query now was, not how life shall be enjoyed, but what shall be done to save souls. The Present was absorbed in the Future.

Hercules and his twelve labors gave way to the acts of the twelve apostles. Cupids, demons, genii, Titans and Prometheus, furies, fates, and tutelary deities, the entire prolific, poetical lore and beautiful legends of heathenism were transformed into the superior fancies of Christian minds. Not fancies, merely; nay, realities. For, as new and more complete revelations of immortality descended to earth through the teachings of Jesus, the eye of faith saw more clearly into the nature and conditions of spiritual life. Although partially blinded by theological craft, and befogged by sensual obtuseness, yet it did, at times, catch glimpses of unutterable things. Then arose in mankind the idea of a purer, nobler life, with illimitable spiritual capacity, based upon the impregnation of human with divine mind. Hence its heaven. Hence its wonder-

ful hierarchy, its powers and dominions, thrones and principalities, saints and glorified martyrs, the just perfected, and, above all, that divine incarnation of virgin loveliness and maternal tenderness, the highest type of female beauty and virtue, the goddess mother, Queen of Glory, as far superior to Diana and Venus as the spirituality of the Christian's heaven is to the sensuousness of the Mahometan paradise. Instead of crowns, goblets, and nectar, the tokens of sensual appetites, vanity, pride, and envy, the joke and trick, nudity and debauchery, we have ineffable harmony, ecstatic joy, the symbols of earthly trials and purifications. Cross, fagot, knife, or gridiron, by whichever instrumentality of suffering, human nature won its celestial crown, here we find its representation, the distinguishing glory of each conquering spirit. And not the tests alone, but the rewards also. Wreaths of heavenly roses, the music of divine harps, garments resplendent with gold and precious stones, thrones flaming with celestial light — whatever ravished the eye, was harmonious to the ear, chaste to the sight, or elevating to the soul, symbolized by those objects which were most precious, delectable, and glorious to the sanctified heart, abounded in the New Heavens.

Mark the distinction between Olympus and the great city of the Lord! In the one there is all action. The gods laugh, cry, roar. They are susceptible to pain as well as to passion. If their lives be the exaltation of humanity, the gain is balanced by its extra weight of dross. Among them we see neither purification nor sanctification. They do not die, nor do they cease to suffer. The idealization of the pagan mind never rose above the level of its earth-bound conceptions. For its deities and their heaven it could invent nothing superior to the exaggerations of

earthly powers and pleasures. True, its hell is very weak. It scarcely thought of that. A place of departed spirits ; nothing defined ; confinement, darkness, *being* ; a shadow, a vapor, a shade, not comfortable, perhaps miserable, but no hideous eternity of torments, with a pitiless, revengeful Creator frowning forever thereupon. This invention was reserved, in its complete, picturesque horror, for the new theology. Nothing was too precious for its saved, nor too awful for its damned.

True, the Catholic deities, Christ and the Virgin, *weep* and *rejoice*, not, however, for themselves, but for others. In them we perceive that ineffable tenderness and self-sacrifice, as wonderful in its height, depth, and breadth, as hell was prolific with gaping misery. These are sympathetic gods, penetrated with love and compassion for the human race. They comprehend frailty and temptation. They pity and pardon. They love their enemies. They joy in doing good, not counting the cost nor the gain to themselves. Egoism is foreign to their natures. In them, passion, infirmity, and weakness are annihilated. They are truly divine. The spirit rules triumphant. How wide the chasm between Diana and Mary, Jupiter and "Our Father" !

In all ages, heathen philosophy has had, not prophets, but sages. Their truths, comprehended by the learned few, fell vacuous upon the masses, if ever they reached them. Wise men of India, China, Egypt, Persia, and Greece, before the advent of Christ, uttered sublime sayings and wholesome maxims. In spirit, some even anticipated much of the lofty morality of Jesus. All taught well. Socrates, in the quiet sublimity of his death, well-nigh forestalls Christ. But there lacked an element in them which abounded in him. Philosophy may be sub-

lime, but it is cold. To the hard-working world, Plato is an abstraction. To benefit mankind at large, the wisdom and knowledge such as he gathered to himself must be transfused into action, suffering, and plain doctrine. Profound reflection is the attribute of but few. Impulse, instinct, are common to all. Hence, while men are deaf to verbal verities, they are keenly sensible to the noble and beautiful in example. It was reserved to Christ alone to magnetize the universal heart. His words were instruction; his life, revelation. Both went to the marrow of humanity. They were what it needed. Some being, bearing its likeness, with the same bodily susceptibilities, one of the people, generous, unselfish, sublime in the simplicity of virtue, and intelligible in spoken truth, fearless because of the higher life within him, feeling his self-imposed duty, unshrinking from the sad present because of his repose upon the great future, animated by God himself, the medium of the Word, if needs be of its Power, a preacher, prophet, and martyr; also, in every relation of life, a loving, pleasant MAN: such was what the world required to inspire it with new religious thought, the while demonstrating its vitality and practicability. The Times had ripened for a Christ. THE Christ came.

Man creates his god out of his ideal good. It may be an image of wood or of gold; the incarnation of pride, ambition, luxury, or lust. It may be a being of goodness, power, wisdom, love; or all combined in infinite degree. We, each of us, fashion our deities according to the quality of our souls, and the living lessons before them. If so be we are sincere, earnest, and progressive, our god, be its symbolization what it may, is to be respected. It is our present highest. Education and inspiration will develop still higher ideas, and, of consequence, a correspond-

ing idealization in faith and material. Art is the foreshadowing of the thought. It incarnates our best conceptions and aspirations, portrays and betrays our affections, and is the gauge of our intellect. If the art or action of another be superior to our own, provided we are seekers and not dogmatizers, either awakens within us a corresponding effort that lifts us above our former level. The fact that we are capable of progression, should make us charitable to all thought and its generated art, truthful and sincere in itself, which covers the ground over which we have painfully trod, or others have for us. The pagan mind should no more be despised than the Catholic. Without the former, the latter would not have been. It was the first turn in the wheel of human development. So, if we are now on the vantage-ground of greater knowledge and further insight into spiritualities, it equally behooves us to have a sympathy for and to discover the truths and beauties, after their own kind, which may still speak to our souls, because a graft on a common faith, from out of the past of Catholic art. But charity and appreciation need not disarm criticism. Wherever, and in whatever, we find artifice and inanity, a foul spirit and lying tongue, whether the remains of classicalism or the degeneracy of catholicism, it is a duty to expose and denounce them.

No sect, school, or race, has a monopoly of truth or beauty. Providence disperses its gifts widely and lavishly. We cannot, therefore, help seeing, despite the narrowing tendencies of a specific Protestant training,—for all education based upon sectarianism is necessarily restrictive and exclusive,—and notwithstanding the false logic, false pretence, and culpable superstitions of Catholicism, that its sphere of religious thought and faith is at the bottom broader, and consequently embracing more truth, at the



same time including all the religious truth of protestantism without its liberty. This confession will satisfy neither party. But it is necessary to manifest our stand-point of criticism for the task before us. We see much truth hidden among the traditions of the Church. Her miracles are not all unreal. As we progress in our understanding of the mysteries of nature, we shall see that the miraculous will disappear before the natural. There is a spiritual world near by and intimately associated with our own. Purgatory is not a barefaced fiction. Earth-life has an influence over spirit-life which reciprocates. There is a communion of saints. Hierarchies do exist. Angels and demons, possessions and revelations, are not necessarily illusions. We can, and sometimes do, hold converse with the departed. Prayer avails them as it does us. Spirit-life is not a fixed, eternal, unchangeable fact, as protestantism would define it, but progressive, self-developing. Catholicism is an ecclesiastical despotism, and therefore we deny it. But we perceive its greater spiritual adaptation to man, and wider range of natural truths; and, alas! its more cunning adaptation of unworthy means to low ends; its subtle appeals to sense and to selfishness; its all things to all men; so let it rule. Catholicism is elaborated priest-craft. But gold still shines through. As the mud of Californian rivers conceals the rich treasure imbedded in it, here and there sparkling into light, so do the artifices and audacities of papacy the Word brought by Jesus into the world.

Having thus briefly referred to the primary differences of scope and inspiration between classical and Catholic art, and the position which the latter bears towards protestantism, before proceeding in subsequent chapters to review Christian painting, we will repeat, that while we must

admit that Greek art excelled in execution, because its aim was natural and its object beauty, yet Catholic art far excelled it in motive. It soared higher, saw further, was purer, nobler, truer. Superior in these points, its comparative inferiority resulted from its essaying the supernatural and mystical, shrinking not from the sublimities of the Godhead, appealing earnestly to spiritual beauty, and failing, not in idea, but in execution, from, in its outset, overlooking too much the æsthetic side of art, and the study of nature on which it rests. This failure was so partial and so inconsequential compared to the real greatness of its works, that we are tempted to overlook it. But criticism must not be obstructed by sympathy. Nor should we forget those important periods of art, one of stagnation and fanaticism, and the other of sensualism and infidelity, the former succeeding to the simplicity of primitive Christian art, and the latter to the mediæval epoch, in which Catholic art shone with so bright a lustre over Europe. It shall be our effort to trace the stream of Christian art, chiefly in the Tuscan and Umbrian schools, through its various mutations, so as to present them in a connected and intelligible aspect, with their relations to national and intellectual progress.

## CHAPTER II.

Christian Art divided into three distinct Epochs, Theological, Religious, and Naturalistic. Origin and Characteristics of each. Bath-life of Imperial Rome, *vs.* The Art and Life of the Catacombs. Purism in Art. Results of Church Triumphant on Art. Hermit Life. Distinction between Latin and Byzantine Painting. Root of Latin Art in the old Etruscan. Radical Difference between it and the Grecian—the one aiming at Idealization—the other at Actualization. Greek Guide to Painting of Mount Athos, a Catechism of Byzantine Art. Its Rules and Principles. Nature and Origin of Idolatry and Symbolism. Tendency of old Facts and Fictions to new Forms.

PAINTING, as influenced by Christianity, may be divided into three great epochs, viz.: the Theological, or that in which the dogmas and traditions of the Church wholly controlled art; the Religious, when mind, having become free, though still inspired by catholicism, opened up to itself fresh progress; and the Naturalistic, in which the motives and models were derived directly from the natural world. The last is the parent of Protestant art. The first period had its origin in the catacombs of Rome, beginning in the second century, and terminating its universal rule in the thirteenth. In southern Europe, the chief point of our inquiry, its existence elsewhere being but partial and derived from this common fountain-head, it subdivides into two schools, the Latin and Byzantine, each characterized by the fundamental qualities of the two races. Both began in purism, and ended in fetichism. The former was largely under the influence of the latter, each ruled by theology, and although to the general observer there is

little to distinguish them apart, yet there do exist peculiar features in either, which extend through their common origin, growth, and decline.

The second or Religious period was born of the Latin school, which, in the general awakening of mind in Italy towards the thirteenth century, burst the theological shackles which had so long bound painting into fixed and lifeless forms, and, going to nature and classical art for instruction, inspired by a new liberty of thought and action, though still obedient to the old faith, clinging to religion as its primary inspiration, produced two noble phases of art, the Epic and Lyric, fed from pure but distinct streams of feeling — the one looking more closely to nature for its incitements, the other to the devotional sentiments. Under their combined action, in three centuries, brilliant with noble effort, art reached the summit of modern excellence, its distinctive feature the while being Religion, but with sufficient scope of taste to include every other department which tended to instruct, refine, or gratify the peoples to whom it was daily bread. Hence its large admixture of history, allegory, mythology, and mere ornament. These were never the dominant subjects, but sufficiently common to prove the more generous mental culture of the times, stimulated by æsthetic desire. Neither was the landscape, nor the animal world, though held in minor consideration, neglected. Whatever of excellence has since been attained for them in art has its primary example here. Unhappily, this rapid rise was succeeded by a still more rapid decline. Religion gave way to wanton scepticism, freedom to selfish despotism, luxury to consuming sensuality. Art, which for a while, under the guise of the Renaissance, flourished in unwholesome vigor upon the débris of paganism, speedily sunk into imbecility and degradation; so that, while the

Byzantine school still lingers wherever the Greek religion prevails, as the fossil of dogmatic theology, the great Religious period, so infinitely superior, in four centuries passed away by the reactionary force of the very causes to which it owed its being. Absolute religious art now exists nowhere.\* Imitations and conventional revivals, like those of Cornelius, Overbeck, and their disciples, are seed upon stony ground. Having no root in the heart of the present age, they do not thrive. Copies possessing no life themselves cannot impart it to others. Fortunately, the sensualism which, fungus-like, sprung from the Renaissance, has also perished with it.

The decline of Religious art led the way to the third great period, which, striking its roots into the preceding, under the influences, if not wholly of protestantism, of the renewed liberty and greater knowledge which it has strengthened, and the superior development, among the northern races, of domestic over public life, has begun a progress auspicious of favorable results. Its development thus far, based upon the close sympathy with the external world, characteristic in general of the French, Dutch, German, and English schools, is comparatively low in degree, and tending to the common. But a higher aspiration is slowly struggling through their material crust. Symbolical idealization was the great characteristic of the preceding period. Not the æsthetic quality of classical work,

\* Religious artists, yes; filled with spiritual aspirations, like Ary Scheffer, but such are the exceptions, and not the rule, of the age. Hess and other Germans have, indeed, sought to revive gold and diapered backgrounds, and other characteristics of olden art, but their pale, cold half-tints have no likeness to the rich, positive hues of the early masters, and their *feeling* is equally misplaced with the spirit of the age, which demands, not imitation, but new life, in painting. Overbeck has carried his respect for ascetic art so far as to refuse to draw from living models, lest he should become too naturalistic, and thus jeopardize the purity of his religious idealism.



but the attempt, above all, to render the spiritual meaning of art. Representation characterizes this. To be faithful to the appearance of things and events as seen by the general eye; to be truthful to external nature; a matter-of-fact, every-day, familiar art, delighting in landscape, animal life, human passions, and earth-scenes: such is the naturalism of our day. It neither deifies humanity, nor worships beauty; therefore it is not akin to classical art. It protests against theological control, and pays no heed to its dogmas; so it has no likeness to Byzantine art. Opposing itself to the spiritualities of the later religious art, disgusted with the bastard classicalism that succeeded it, renouncing the sensualism and admonished by the poverty of invention and feeling that attended the decadence of the second period, it clings lovingly to the homely and facile, believes in scientific progress, and, as yet, neither aspires to teach nor elevate the religious or æsthetic mind. It indolently accommodates itself to the world about it. But such is not its final destiny.

Later we shall endeavor to penetrate beneath its crust of materialism, and to discover its ultimate tendencies and possibilities. At present, we simply identify the three great periods which divide Christian art, as a basis of a more particular classification to follow. Before, however, proceeding to the special topic of this volume, the ideas, schools, and names that in Etrurian Italy illustrate the second period, it is necessary briefly to review the cognate phases of the Theological period.

This, as previously remarked, had its origin in subterranean Rome, and subsequently grew into Latin art. Its primary characteristics are allegory and symbolism. As it did not come into existence until Roman art was already far gone in decadence, and then only in the hands of unar-

tistic men, converts quickened with pious horror at the idolatrous images which they had so recently renounced, it is not surprising that it should have been simple in motive, rude in style, and narrow in idea. Directly speaking, it had nothing to do with art. It was simply pictorial writing and emblematic language. The early Christians did not even avail themselves of the technical skill and artistic experience which Rome could still offer, for that would have connected their art with heathenism. Shrinking from the example of paganism in the multiplication of idolatrous images, at first they did not even permit the representation of sacred subjects.\* The gods being regarded as subtle devices of Satan, the artists who made them were looked upon as his emissaries. If one of their profession offered himself as a neophyte, he was refused baptism unless he renounced his art, and were he afterwards detected in practising it, he was cut off from Christian fellowship. With them, art, besides being associated with idolatry, was contaminated by sensuality. The effect of paganism had been to deify sensation. Luxury was stained with vice, and religion with crime. Pagan Rome breathed an atmosphere of debasing indulgence. Brutal appetites were gratified and stimulated by the bloody scenes of the amphitheatres, and hardy bodies made effeminate by the seductive appliances of public baths. These abounded in architectural magnificence, artistic luxury, and every incitement to physical and moral enervation. Open alike to all classes, during the day they were the homes of the lowest vagabonds, who at night littered themselves on rags and dirt where they best might. But here, untaxed, they found provided for them splendid

\* Paintings were not introduced into churches until the close of the fourth century, and Christian idolatry began a century later.

halls and sumptuous retreats, whose atmosphere, deliciously perfumed, and graduated to every agreeable degree of warmth or coolness, fostered Italian indolence to its ripest insouciance. But if not inclined to delicious lassitude, the Roman idler was free to wander under noble colonnades, or in delightful gardens, enjoying at option music, recitations, games of skill and strength, gossip, or politics, gazing curiously upon the world of fashion about him, while surrounded by the masterpieces of Grecian sculpture and painting. He fed, too, in part, at the public expense, beside having at his daily gratuitous disposal, to administer to his sensuous longings, a degree of art, luxury, and splendor such as Louis XIV. coveted in vain for Versailles. The experiment, therefore, of the complete development of the sensuous man, apart from morality, may be considered to have been thoroughly tried by Imperial Rome. The sage maxims of its Senecas, the philosophical piety of its Antonines, and the hardier virtues of its Trajans and Vespasians, were insufficient to arrest the torrent of sensual degradation, pampered and nurtured by a selfish, corrupt policy. The old religion and its art perished in the moral wreck. With it sunk liberty and virtue. Young Christianity, therefore, could not do less than to repudiate the dying past, if it would itself live. It forbade all looking back upon the Sodom whence it fled. Not only was the spirit of classical art proscribed, but mortification of bodily appetites succeeded to their previous indulgence. The transition from the baths of Commodus to the sepulchral catacombs was of itself no slight ordeal for a change of heart. Let us trace its result upon painting.

The subjects found therein are few and meagre; either symbols, the most popular of which were the cross, denoting salvation; the peacock, Christianity; the anchor,

hope, faith, and fortitude ; the ship, the Church ; the lyre, public worship ; the palm, victory ; the dove, the Holy Spirit ; the lamb, Christ ; or compositions borrowed from Scripture.\* In spirit, these early paintings were remarkably pure and suggestive. If evidence were needed of the sanctity and excellence of the primitive Church, it is to be found in them, poor though they be in invention and feeble in execution. They are, however, superior in idea and design to the common standard of Italian art that prevailed for centuries preceding the great revival. Through all there shines a genuine simplicity and sincerity altogether foreign to the Church triumphant. It did not refuse to adapt, or rather to transform, certain heathen compositions, as Orpheus entrancing wild beasts by the melody of his lyre, a Mercury carrying the goat, originally Greek, into the Christian allegory of the Good Shepherd, and to picture the river-gods of antiquity with their urns. But it carefully weeded out all pagan idea from the transformed emblems. Angels are not found represented in the catacombs, unless the little figures so strikingly like pagan genii, sporting amid vine-branches, may be considered as such. These beings, about the fifth century, were finally transformed into our angels, by being made tall, youthful, winged, and chastely draped. Previous to this, there existed a certain latitude in the use of pagan forms for Christian symbolism, partly decorative and partly instructive, evincing the slow transition of painting into strictly Christian art. The Saviour, in the earliest times, had not the traditional likeness derived from the letter of Lentulus to the Roman senate, first made known in the third century. For a considerable period, the early art continued

\* For further details, see Lord Lindsay's *Christian Art*, vol. i. p. 43. London, 1847.

to be singularly chaste, simple, and free from any approach to idolatry. So scrupulous was it in regard to the naked figure, that even in its crucifixions of Christ or Peter, compositions of a comparatively late period, each is clothed in a long tunic reaching to his ankles; while the Virgin and Infant, saints, and even the personifications of the seasons as emblems of human life, are covered with superabundant drapery. Indeed, one of the chief distinctions between classical and Christian art was the rigid avoidance in the latter of the nude. In the earliest pictures of the Baptism, Christ is hidden by the water to his waist, the idea being the *baptism*, while in later art, the ambition was to render the naked figure of the Saviour as beautiful as possible, the water never rising above the ankles. But the most touching witness to the pure charity of the earliest Christians, and that, too, amid their sorest trials, is the absence of those martyrdoms, tortures, and pictures suggestive of physical suffering and the injuries they received from their persecutors, which subsequently, and long after they had ceased, became a prolific theme in art. As Lord Lindsay truly witnesses, "not a thought of bitterness or revenge has expressed itself in painting and sculpture during three centuries."\* The most constant theme is the joy of the resurrection. Immortal life was kept ever in view by significant emblems. Scripture narratives were interpreted as typical of fundamental doctrines, and the progress of the Christian, through trials and temptations, guided by faith, to final Redemption. Christ was not represented in his agonies or passions, nor in those dramatic events of his

\* Vol. i. p. 50. Agincourt, pl. 12, fig. 18, gives the only instance that might be quoted as an exception; that of a female saint, though in her case the fact of martyrdom is not explicit. St. Sebastian tortured by arrows is to be seen, but the date is by no means early.



life which became the favorite themes of later times: but as a miracle of Love; the Saviour triumphant over Death and Sin; the mighty FACT of eternal life.

This purism did not long survive the conversion by Constantine of the Church suffering into the Church victorious. With this change came an influx of other subjects, taken from its histories, but treated by artists recently, if not still at heart, pagans, and whose education was derived from the practice and examples of classical art, now in its fullest decadence. Combined with ignorance to disrobe art of its simplicity as well as beauty, and to merge it more and more into superstition, was the increasing influence of asceticism by means of the dominant orders of hermit monks, who had now risen to great influence in the Church. At first, the mosaics of Rome and Ravenna, executed in the fourth and fifth centuries, exhibited tokens of the excellence of the bas-reliefs on the column of Trajan, which evidently were their models in composition.\* But classical example soon ceased to be felt, and art degenerated into lifeless forms, uncouth and exaggerated, in sentiment contemplative and symbolical, but more like the rude efforts of savages than the work of a once highly accomplished race. We refer more directly to Latin art, which, after it emerged from the catacombs, lasted in Italy, modified somewhat in the north by the peculiar spirit and freshness of Lombard life, until the thirteenth century, with but slight and transient variations and those mainly of foreign origin, upon one wretched level of artistic degradation. With it, there survived a decayed branch of classical art, in the form of miniatures and illuminations introduced into the manuscripts of the heathen poets, copies of which thus rudely decorated, dating from the fourth century, exist in the

\* Agincourt, pl. 14, 15.

Vatican and other libraries of Europe. The earliest, being the best, betoken still more ancient examples of a superior character, from which they undoubtedly were borrowed.

The technical root of Latin art is in the old Etruscan. Greek art, both classical and Byzantine, has exercised much influence upon Italy. But it always remained an exotic; fashion rather than feeling, or the purer taste of amateur patrons, being the cause of its several introductions and partial acclimation. In each instance, cut off from its source by time or circumstance, it has finally been overpowered by indigenous forms and motives, severe, grand, and noble, indicative of constitutional strength and energy, especially in architecture in its best estate, as we see in the Roman arch and dome and the rustic and massive Etruscan stone-work, still the prevailing style in Tuscany, tempered occasionally with the northern Gothic or southern classical elements, but constantly out-mastering them, and retaining its firm hold upon its native soil. In painting and sculpture, the Etruscans did not rival their neighbors, the Greeks; a fact vouched for by the disinterred art of their respective sepulchres, and the artistic remains of those cities in southern Italy founded by colonies from Greece. Coming northward to Etruria proper, we find that its art, as now chiefly to be seen in the museums of Volterra, Cortona, and Florence, lacks the fine feeling for beauty which belongs to the other, and though graphic and spirited, is deficient in symmetry, grace, and accurate proportions. There is much, however, especially in their earlier productions, that indicates Grecian influence. Indeed, in both epochs, the Grecian and Byzantine forms and motives have been so interfused with the Etruscan and Latin, that it is difficult at times to define the precise lines of demarcation.

But certain radical differences are clearly distinguishable. Grecian art invariably seeks the heroic and beautiful, and consequently tinges all that it touches with its spirit of idealism. In portraiture, it gives types of character rather than actual likenesses. In imagination, it is more fertile, graceful, poetical, and sensuous. Etruscan art, on the contrary, with its Roman and Latin progeny, clings to naturalism. It deals in facts, and loves material nature. Hence its portraiture is to be relied on. Personality is not lost in ideality. Events are faithfully portrayed as they actually happened, without the artist's first resolving them by his standard of beauty into their highest conditions of being. He cared less to exalt and more to be true. Thus in the one we find facts; in the other ideas. The decadence of both was equally deplorable; but in Byzantine art it ends in exaggeration and caricature, and in Latin, in monstrosity; for it was easier to be naturally ugly than for ignorance to mimic beauty when its soul had fled.

A favorable example of so-called Latin art in its decadence, is to be seen in the golden altar-piece in the church of St. Ambrogiana at Milan, done in the ninth century, by Wolvenius.\* The execution is so excellent as to suggest Byzantine skill, though Italians jealously claim it as their own, without other proof than its locality. As it was customary then and later to send to Constantinople for works of this character, especially in bronze, and Byzantine artists as exiles or emigrants were much employed in Italy, the presumption is in favor of its Greek origin, the more so from its superiority to other work of the same epoch. We find no evidence of the influence of Latin on Greek art, but much to the contrary. The intercourse between the two coun-

\* For colored engraving of which, see Ferrario's *Europa*, vol. i. p. 226. Florence, 1831.

tries being so constant, this would not have been the case, had there not been an acknowledged superiority in the art of Greece over that of Italy.

Byzantine and Latin art have been too much confounded, and both denounced as radically bad. The evil in them is directly traceable to the tyranny of theology. But neither their art nor their theology is to be unreservedly condemned. There was truth in each. Christianity is not responsible for the general dryness, meagreness, and feebleness of Latin and Byzantine art. For we perceive in the later schools of Italy, that its inspirations were sufficiently copious, as soon as the artistic mind was able to cast off the shackles of dictatorial theology, to exalt art to its highest conditions. Properly speaking, art had no independent existence from the time of Constantine to Cimabue. It was simply pictorial or plastic dogma, sectarian thought, or historical fact, uttered without reference to artistic law, and entirely controlled, even to the forms and vehicles of expression, by the dominant ecclesiasticism. But we find that even this source of inspiration was at times open to artistic truth, for the council held at Constantinople, A.D. 692, enjoined the substitution of direct naturalistic representation for symbolism.\* In strict fact, however, art was a slave to the religious mind, which looked upon beauty as a snare. With the sensual reminiscences of paganism still so fresh about it, joined to its misinterpretation of the "flesh and the devil," it is not surprising that iconoclasts made war upon art while other zealots, with still less reason, made it a principle to rob it of all external beauty, rendering even the body of the Saviour as emaciated and repulsive as possible, based upon a literal reading of Isaiah liii. 2, "He hath no

\* Lord Lindsay, vol. i. p. 78.

form nor comeliness."\* But notwithstanding the restrictions of theology, the Byzantine artistic mind at times man-

\* *The Greek Guide to Painting*, (*Ερμηνεία τῆς ζωγραφικῆς*), a monkish compendium of its rules, taught the preparation of lime, pencils, colors, composition and arrangement of pictures, prescribing the inscriptions, and reducing the art to an unvarying mechanical process still in vogue among the Greek painters. M. Didron, in his Introduction to a French translation of this work, Paris, 1845, published by order of the government, says that the monks of Mount Athos attribute it to the tenth or eleventh century, but he ascribes it to the fourteenth. Of Byzantine art in general, he writes, "In Greece, the artist is the slave of the theologian; his works, copied by his successors, he copies from those who preceded him. He is limited to his traditions as the animal to his instincts; the work is his, but the invention and the idea are derived from the theologians." Egyptian art, likewise, was equally prescribed by the priesthood to defined, unalterable forms, and from like motives. Indeed, wherever the theocratic principle of government has been absolute, art has either been fettered or proscribed; the Egyptians and Byzantines going to the one extreme, and the Jews, Puritans, and Quakers to the other. The Byzantines had a special formula of prayer, invocations, and pious exercises, in which they say that they painted in the "fear of God, for art is a divine thing," and call upon God "to instruct them." Didron, p. 15. Their labors were not only prescribed, but divided as among manufacturers. One designed the compositions; another drew the heads; a third, the draperies; a fourth, the ornaments; a fifth, the inscriptions; others prepared the gold grounds and colors, according to written directions. But this was for common work. Genius occasionally ventured flights on its own pinions, giving birth to beautiful compositions, deeply imbued with Oriental mysticism. Before the Fall, Adam and Eve are represented as without sex. In the Fall of the Rebel Angels, their degree of ugliness is proportioned to their relative distance from heaven or hell; a mystic chord, beginning with the spiritual beauty of the pure angels in the celestial atmosphere, and ending in demoniacal brutality with the inhabitants of the bottomless pit. Seraphim are represented by fire-like red, with three pairs of red wings, without drapery, with bare feet, and with swords. Cherubim have their feet covered, wear richly decorated tunics, and have two wings only. The hierarchy of heaven is divided into nine great orders; three classes subdivided into three sections. But the mysticism of Byzantine theology is too involved for explanation in a note. We refer briefly to its prominent points, and leave the curious reader to trace its prolix meaning in its art.

The Byzantines repudiated sculpture in their churches on account of the divine interdict against "graven images," and because statuary afforded more facilities than paintings for pious frauds. The chief distinction between the Byzantine and Latin art-idea is the greater refinement and profounder mysticism of the former. The Latin benediction is represented by opening the three fingers of the right hand, and shutting two. The Greek requires an ingenious use of the five, so as to form a sort of divine monogram, IC, XC, Jesus Christ.



ifested happier influences. Hence we often perceive in their cycle of compositions derived from the scriptures, a

The Latin nimbus upon the heads of the saints is a plain circle; the Greek includes a red cross, upon which is painted "ὁ ὢν," I AM. With them, John the Baptist has wings upon his shoulders, because he is called the divine messenger, from the same motive that their ancestors bestowed them upon Mercury as the messenger of Olympus. In his transfiguration, Christ is represented in the midst of a wheel of fire, or a red triangle, symbolical of the Trinity, with rays of light issuing from the "Man-God." (See plate A, fig. 1.) The Latin composition is simply a diffused golden light or aureola.

One of the grandest and most mystical compositions, painted upon the great cupola of churches, is the "Divine Liturgy." At the east is Christ, turning his back upon the principal altar, facing the worshippers, attired as the great archbishop, and on the point himself of celebrating the solemn sacrifice of the mass. Circling about him defile an innumerable company of angels, bearing the sacred utensils, crosses, banners, candlesticks, chalices, robes, the spear to pierce his side, and the plate to hold the host. Then follows, upheld by six angels, the dead Christ, now to be laid in the tomb, as the sacrifice completed. Still another group represents his baptism in Jordan. The Saviour stands upon a large, square stone, from under each angle of which, horrible serpents, emblematical of his triumph over sin, crawl out. In short, Byzantine art was the Bible interpreted by mysticism; the most profound mysteries furnishing the most popular subjects. Its degradation was in its rigidity and immobility; while the Latin art, more naturalistic, became rude and vulgar, from ignorance and decay of true feeling. This is shown in its final preference for the nude, and the frequent choice of such subjects as the incestuous daughters of Lot, and the amorous wife of Potiphar.

Let us learn from the monks themselves their ostensible motives in painting. In the Appendix to his *Greek and Latin Christian Manual and Iconography*, p. 451, Didron quotes one of them as saying, in olden times, "We have learned, not only from the holy fathers, but from the apostles, and I may dare say from Christ himself, how to make sacred images. We represent Christ in the human form, because he appeared as such on earth, like to us except in sin. We also represent the Almighty as an old man, because he was seen as such by Daniel; the Holy Spirit as a dove, because it was thus seen at Jordan. We represent also the traits of the Holy Virgin and all the saints, and reverence them as such, but do not worship them. Thus we do not say that such or such a representation in painting is the Christ, or Holy Virgin, or a real saint, but when we render homage to an image we do it to the prototype represented by the image. We do not adore the colors and the art, but the type of Christ, the real person of Christ, who is in the heavens — 'for,' says Saint Basil, 'the honor addressed to images is given to the model. We represent our holy personages to recall their virtues, their labors, and to raise our souls towards them. We act, therefore, wisely in respecting and honoring images.'"

The principal workshop — for it cannot be considered as a studio — of the Byzantine school, is Mount Athos in Greece, which is a province of monks.

refinement in motive, a variety and spirit of expression, and in faint degree a beauty of execution, which to some extent recall their classical art. And although the prescribed series of Greek compositions were rarely deviated from, yet they contained so much that was excellent, that they were the guides for many artists in the palmiest days of Italian art, especially those who, like Duccio, Fra Angelico, and Taddeo Bartolo, devoutly sympathized with their mysticism. Both in Latin and Byzantine art, their decadence and utter lifelessness were the more apparent as they receded from the examples and traditions of their previous national schools inspired by paganism. We cannot, however, without a tiresome research into dates, and the mere antiquarianism of art, trace their precise fluctuations in style from their origin to the revival of Italian art in the thirteenth century. This has been admirably done by Kugler in his "History of Italian Painting," who as concisely as possible, referring to examples still visible in their original localities, sketches the peculiarities of either school during this long period. The Latin art, ever animated in some degree with the old Etruscan element of action and realism, was always freer in spirit though ruder in technical execution than the Byzantine, which, the more widely it departed from the æsthetic principles of the classical school, relied, as all debased art does, more and more for effect upon splendor of materials and minute manipulation. Therefore, while, as we shall perceive, in the revived Christian

As a school of painting, it has continued to exist in a uniform, unbroken career for thirteen hundred years. There are on it twenty large monasteries, equal to as many towns, women, of course, excluded, ten villages, two hundred and fifty isolated cells, and one hundred and fifty hermitages. The largest convents contain thirty-three churches or chapels, and the smallest six. Each cell has its chapel, and each hermitage its altar, so that in all Mount Athos there are nine hundred and thirty-five churches, chapels, and oratories, nearly all of which are painted in fresco, and crowded with sacred pictures on wood.

art of Italy, costly and rich materials were discreetly and chastely used with regard to their symbolical meaning and effect in sacred topics, in the degraded Byzantine they were lavishly employed out of poverty of design and invention.

Before proceeding further in our analysis of Christian painting, it is well fully to define what in the preceding chapter was briefly alluded to, viz.: the true distinction between idolatry and symbolism or the substantive idealization of the religious sentiment. The common rule with Christians generally, is to class all that has its origin in paganism as gross idolatry, and amongst Protestants all that savors of image-worship with the Catholic is branded with the same opprobrious term. This is as uncharitable as it is erroneous. Idolatry is the antithesis of Devotion. Each human being, according to his plane of intelligence, be he Pagan, Protestant, or Catholic, creates to himself from his *idea* of the great creative Power, or Cause, a personality, which becomes the likeness of his good or God. Unable to centre intelligibly the varied attributes of divinity into one individualism, he is led to multiply those images into as many as are requisite to suggest *all* the qualities essential to his idea of God. Unity thus engenders mythology, not because the latter is the truth, but because of the weakness of humanity, which demands a subordination and incarnation of divine powers to come down to its level of motives and sympathies. Hence the idea at the root of the Jupiters, Junos, Christs, and Marys, or other divinities, is radically the same, to wit: to personify or symbolize some one or more divine attributes and to keep it before the external senses as a continued suggestion and inspiration of worship and example. Whoever, therefore, Pagan or Christian, looks upon images in this light, though he may kneel and pray before them, is

no more an idolater than the Protestant, who, excluding all such outward helps, relies solely upon his *mental* image of god or devil, either of which is, in his inner sight, as absolutely personal as if sculptured or painted. Idolatry consists in the *quality* of the worship paid, and the substitution of the *object*, whether it be, as with the Catholic, an *image*, or, as with the Protestant, a *book*, which embodies the idea, for the idea itself. As the mind is narrow and external, it falls into the latter error, and book or image, abstract thought or embodied sentiment, becomes to it an idol, causing religion to degenerate into fetichism. Books and art are useful only as they suggest truth, and elevate the mind above the external sense of things into their spiritual relations. Hence, although in criticising art after the standard of its own laws, we may be compelled to condemn it in particulars, yet in general sentiment we may find it pure and elevating. This is the character of much Catholic art of many periods. To appreciate it, we must inquire into its primary motives. So far as it inspires the mind with true devotion, it is worthy; in the degree that it stimulates superstition, unworthy. As with the Bible, it is not the thing itself so much as the mode of interpreting it, that engenders good or evil. Art in popular consideration has always been secondary to the religious sentiment. The uncultivated mind, barbarous in its ideas of divinity, satisfied itself with images of corresponding rudeness, provided it recognized in them claims to veneration. Hence we find in the age of Phidias as well as of Raphael, that the most beautiful works were all but powerless for purposes of devotion, while shapeless stones, and black, hideous Madonnas have been invested by the multitude with miraculous powers, and worshipped as divine. There is, therefore, an intimate relation between error, idolatry, and

ugliness, which we must keep in mind in judging art ; distinct, however, from that technical ignorance, accompanied with great purity and power of sentiment, noticeable in many of the early masters, and which exalts their work proportionately.\*

\* This common necessity of mankind to personify its religious ideas and traditions for purposes of worship, causes many startling analogies between heathen and Christian art. In the Vatican there is a statue (fig. pl. 4, Visconti, *Musco Pio Clementino*, Milan, 1818) of Juno nursing Mars, with a *nimbus* around her head, and rigid draperies cast in the Byzantine mould, but otherwise so like the later Madonnas that it might pass for one. The halo, or golden glory, is of pagan origin, and signifies power. When confined to the head, it is termed a *nimbus*, but when it enveloped the body, an *aureola*, the latter being restricted to the high personages of heaven. Evil spirits, particularly Satan, are also painted with the *nimbus*. These are pertinent examples of a common human sentiment finding a common form of expression. So myths originating in the instincts of humanity are readily transferred from one class of forms to another, retaining under new names their original significance. The Lares of antiquity have their counterpart in the patron saints of modernism. God, as Jupiter, to the Greek, signified regal power ; to the Christian, perfect power, but as the *father*. Zeuxis's masterpiece was Jupiter on his throne surrounded by the gods. Christian artists, like Raphael in his "Dispute of the Sacrament," simply modify this composition to harmonize the conception to their notions of the character of the hierarchy of heaven. Indeed, we find in the Catholic ritual and art many such apparitions ; old fictions or facts remodelled, despising their ancestry, and now ready to give birth to an equally ungrateful progeny.



## CHAPTER III.

Relative Importance of Ideas and Individuals in History. Conservatism and Progress, their Nature and Relations. The fresh Tide-wave of Artistic Growth. The Religious Epoch. Its Vigor and Comprehensiveness. A New-birth of Genius. Giotto's O. How the Age welcomed Art. The Multitude of Artists. Etruria proper the chief Site of the new Movement. The great Names that distinguish it. Methods, Materials, and Frame-work of Mediæval Painting.

THE common method of narrating history is to magnify persons as if they were the causes of prominent events in the march of human progress. We are thus led to connect great movements rather with illustrious individuals than with the great principles, which, as mankind ripen in Thought, from age to age, come from the Unseen, and, with the force of an electrical current and the sagacity of magnetism, find homes, in various degrees of adaptation, in various Minds, who become the mediums through whom the new "Word" is delivered with prophetic fire to all men. These chosen individuals are indeed entitled to our reverence; for they are the incarnations of fresh currents of divinity, which sweep over the earth, dispelling the malaria of ignorance, and quickening intellect into more active movement. While, therefore, we extol the men through whom truth is manifested with new and more expansive force, we should regard them as types or agents, gifted with special powers for a special purpose, and judge them according to the scale of those powers, and the measure of their fulfilment.

We find in particular ages, confined at first to certain localities or races, that, as old forms and expressions sink into decrepitude, having exhausted their force of progression, new forms and expressions, having a likeness to the Past, but indicative of recuperated energy and greater innate power of expansion, succeed to the old, gathering from them their wheat, and creating a fresh intellectual and moral era, in whose ordained cycle earth-life moves grandly on, making another step forward in its eternal Progress. There is a seeming mystery in this strange organic movement of mind, apparently so capricious, rolling nations backwards and forwards in its career, crushing the effete Past, with its errors, into the dust, to enrich the soil of a dimly discerned Future. Amid changes and disasters that grieve the hearts of men, and puzzle their brains to know Wherefore, providing for them the double necessity, to so many a sad one, of living and working, — death, decay, destruction, being the ostensible conditions of advancement, — indifferent alike to the ruin of empires or the piteous wail of the sons of Adam, there sits that grim, inexorable Fate. But as the understanding becomes enlightened, and time rolls by, we see it assume the shape of Law, with its attendant genii, Love and Wisdom. To mourn for departing joy, and to decry that which mars our present, is natural. Conservatism hankers for the past. But the conservatism of to-day was the dreaded innovation of yesterday. We must sympathize with the loss of art, habits, and beliefs that for long centuries have been the familiar joys of millions of fellow-beings, though from a more elevated mental platform we perceive that they perish solely in virtue of fulfilled destiny; their spirit being born into new existences, while their external forms linger amongst us, as do the fossils in the geological

world, to indicate of what manner and shape our predecessors were.

The great tide-wave of artistic growth now to be described, which succeeded the Theological era of Latin art, received its onward impetus from the reawakened intellectual energies of the thirteenth century, and reached its climax in the sixteenth. It gave birth to more superior men, and was the most brilliant, exalted, and prolific period of art, of any period since the corresponding phase of history, in the turbulent times of Grecian democracies and tyrannies, which has so much intellectual and social analogy with the vigor and enterprise of mediæval Italy. Both prove that a state of action, however changeable and perilous, is one of growth. Wars, tumults, factions, and conspiracies, alternate disaster and success, great commercial enterprises and deplorable jealousies, plagues and famines, characterized the times of Zeuxis, Apelles, and Phidias quite as conspicuously as they did those of Giotto, Ghiberti, and Michel Angelo. In each, thought found scope in *doing*. Crimes abounded; so did virtues. There was a prodigious sifting and proving of men and things. Genius and talent, for good and evil, like volcanic throes upheaved society, giving it fresh forms and renewed fertility. Compared with the theological stagnation that in Italy had preceded, and the political tyranny that succeeded this epoch, each equally extinguishing liberty, the one merging the individual into the church, and the other into the state, drilled inanities both, those were healthful days for humanity. What a harvest of art, science, and religion was then and there garnered! What MEN!! What feeling and action to dignify our species!!! It is good to ponder over those days, and to inquire what made Greece and Italy so great and prosperous; to trace the causes of

a civilization so fertile in that which men most covet, and so suggestive of his spiritual destinies that, in comparison, our boasted materialism, comfort, and condition of uses seem, in one sense, meagre and profitless. Selfishness abounds in all times. But as we explore the art which tempts us on, we shall find lofty motive, patriotic pride and expenditure ; a rejoicing in that which exalts the soul in preference to that which gratifies the body, and a generous rivalry in nation and individual for its advancement.

In this moving of the intellectual waters, productive of Dante and Giotto, we must not overlook the service to humanity done by scepticism, in promoting inquiry, casting out error, and disciplining the mind to reason. The feeling of the times being religious, and the reaction from superstitious ignorance, the chief direction of the reawakened thought was metaphysical, though every branch of knowledge gained thereby. Wherever real liberty prevails, extremes in action, speculation, and belief arise. The various opinions formed of this period vary according to the mental focus of those who pass it in review ; some seeing only demagogical turbulence, oligarchal selfishness, rank atheism, or low superstition ; while others view it as pregnant with patriotism and devotion. Each of these social phases is true of it. Then Farinata degli Uberti, and other eminent citizens of Florence, went “ musing about the streets, busy with the solution of that arduous problem, if, peradventure, it should be satisfactorily made out that God was not.” Frederic II. and his high chancellor were charged by a pope with having denounced those “ three notable impostors, Moses, Christ, and Mahomet, who managed successively to juggle the world.” \* On the other hand, numerous ascetic devotees of the

\* See *Memoir of Fra Dolcino and his Times*, by L. Mariotti, p. 46.

type of Catherine of Siena and Francis of Assisi, inspired by a religious enthusiasm which overpowered reason, performed services for humanity worthy of the profoundest respect, despite a fanaticism sometimes ridiculous in degree, or unjust to the individual. But although this period was the one of the greatest power and sanctity of the holy orders, things profane penetrated even into their retreats. St. Bernard complains that the same custom which was so rife in the scandalous era of the church, when Pope "Paul III. believed neither in God nor in any article of religion," \* that of painting the interiors of convents with pagan and sensual subjects, was prevalent then. In the rude art of his times, their power over the senses must, however, have fallen far short of the seductions of Correggio, Julio Romano, and Titian, against whom, in this respect, the church might legitimately complain.

The comprehensiveness of their genius is a noteworthy feature of many of those early masters whose times and works are now about to be considered. Giotto as happily symbolized the entirety of his mental powers as he illustrated his skill of pencil, when, in reply to the messenger of Pope Benedetto IX. sent to procure specimens of the designs of the best artists of that day, he simply drew a perfect circle upon a piece of paper, saying, as he handed it to the astonished agent, "Here is your drawing." "Am I to have nothing but this?" the latter asked. To which, resuming the work which had been interrupted, Giotto quietly replied, "That is more than enough." He was right. The faultless circle so promptly extemporized passed into a proverb, and was accepted by the pope as significant of his range of acquirements, completeness of power, and his centralized individuality. He sent for him

\* Cellini's *Memoirs*, p. 275.



at once to execute the important works he contemplated at Rome.

Niccola Pisano, Giotto, Orgagna, Ghiberti, Masaccio, Fra Angelico, Leonardo, Raphael, and Michel Angelo centred in themselves epochs and styles that, through schools, as the Nile in its annual rise carries fertility along its banks, spread themselves far and wide in influences which no subsequent genius has yet wholly superseded. They generated multitudes of distinguished artists, and yet tower above them all, conspicuous landmarks of civilization. While later artists struggle for success in specialties of art, content to be prominent in one department, they labored for universal skill and knowledge. Hence the greatest among them were eminent not only as sculptors or painters, but as architects and engineers, and accomplished as musicians and poets. Excelling in fresco, their hands were equally trained to the minute perfection and laborious detail of miniature painting, and illumination of manuscripts. They are correctly termed "great masters," for each united in himself genius and success rarely vouchsafed to one person.

There was a broad sweep to their minds, characteristic of an age that discovered and conquered new worlds. They were habituated to grand execution based upon great conceptions. Michel Angelo, in his predilection for "large-hearted" fresco, was half right in his contempt for oil-painting. He and his brethren could indeed be great on panel or paper, but they aspired to grandeur in material as well as thought. Who can fail to sympathize with the daring wish of Domenico Ghirlandajo to be permitted to paint in fresco the entire walls of Florence? Such men panted for space and freedom. Happily, the public comprehended their ambition. Among the Latin races, artists

then were, in popular estimation, what orators and generals are now among us Americans. They took pride in them, honored them, understood them ; and celebrated the completion of great works as public festivities, escorting them, amid crowds of all ranks, with flowers, music, songs, and sacred chants, to their destined localities. With us, the people rush to hear politics ; with them, they hastened to criticize and enjoy art. A fresh painting by Duccio, Ghirlandajo, Leonardo, or Raphael, drew as full houses, and excited as much enthusiasm among their fellow-citizens, as do the meretricious notes of public singers, or the lavish display of graceful limbs of dancing women, with the men of to-day. The reception given to either class is an unimpeachable witness to the sentiment of the times. They lavished high art upon their houses of worship ; we, such as we possess, upon luxurious resorts for eating, drinking, and making merry. With them, there was a lively joy in art, and a deep, underlying religious sentiment consecrated to its noblest works. The fabulous sums we expend on steamboats and railroads, they spent, in noble rivalry, upon architecture, painting, and sculpture. And be it remembered that the peoples of Italy were more generous patrons of art than their princes, and exacted and obtained nobler work. They put no limits to the designs and expenditures of the "great masters" other than that their works should honor religion, and ennoble the country. Cosmo, the most politic and lavish of princes, provoked Brunelleschi to burn the plan of his palace, from vexation and disappointment at its rejection. This, too, when not long before, a single guild of merchants contributed a sum equal to one hundred thousand dollars for one bronze gate to a small church, and the citizens built the marvellous bell-tower of their Duomo at a cost of five

million dollars. Some conception of the enormous wealth of Florence may be had from the fact that during the lifetime of Masaccio seventy families alone, in twenty-three years, paid five million golden florins in taxes, equal to fifteen million five hundred thousand dollars in present value of money. Labor and commerce were so greatly honored that fathers disinherited sons who passed a year without working, and they also lost their rights as citizens, and were considered as nought in the commonwealth. When the government desired to punish a family, it was declared *noble*, and without political rights. Private luxury and extravagance were restrained by sumptuary laws; but public magnificence and hospitality were encouraged by edicts, and the temporary suspension, when the occasion demanded, of the former. In short, in these times, Florence was a thoroughly earnest, democratic commonwealth, the political life-blood of which was interpenetrated with the spirit of labor and trade; thrifty and parsimonious in private, but lavish beyond modern conception, upon art and all that exalted its reputation and increased its glory.\*

The motive that inspired mediæval art was true and noble. It not only created profuse adornment for public places and the homes of the citizens,—a perpetual joy and intellectual stimulant to every beholder,—but it made virtue and faith its basis of thought and action. What marvel then that such daily meat and drink, unstintedly set forth with the utmost magnificence of material and a constantly increasing skill of execution, should have been prized, and the feeling that incited such art devoutly cherished, by all classes; for it was something that equally delighted the individual and honored the nation. And the

\* For other curious particulars of this epoch, see *Histoire des Sciences Mathématiques*, par G. Libri. Paris, 1838.

great worth of art in all ages must lie in its being free and true. Free to every eye as an ever-present, living charm and instruction, and true in the highest sense, because of its affinity to the pure and beautiful.

Such noble art as was born to Florence could ripen only on the most favorable soil and genial atmosphere. We find, therefore, the spirit that sustained it was as liberal as it was lofty in conception. The citizens demanded BEST work, without giving heed to local prejudices or private intrigues. When it was proposed to raise the dome of the cathedral, orders were sent to the Florentine merchants residing in the various countries of Europe to provide "large sums of money" for sending to Florence "the most experienced and distinguished masters" to discuss the project and furnish designs; the work to be intrusted to him who gave best evidence of capacity. And this was the proposal of a Florentine architect himself, Brunelleschi, who subsequently obtained the commission, his plan prevailing over those of all others as being the sole one demonstrated to be equal to that gigantic enterprise, which still remains without a rival except in St. Peter's. Such work was then done, not as later in the boastful, confident spirit of egotistical science, but in humble reliance upon divine aid, "remembering that as this is a temple consecrated to God and the Virgin, they will not fail to infuse knowledge where it is now wanting, and will bestow strength, wisdom, and genius on him who shall be the author of such a project."

To fully appreciate what was accomplished in one city alone of Italy, others in various degrees following in her steps, we must carefully consider all the moral causes of their triumphs in art. Not enjoyment alone is to be

gained from the "old masters," but strength and courage to battle with and overcome what is disheartening or mean. Their faults and shortcomings were many, for they were but human; but their nobility and earnestness of soul, in all great work, stand out in high relief for the encouragement and example of all times. The spirit of the individual was in generous keeping with the spirit of the public. It was not from penuriousness that Gatta fed on beans cooked once a week to save him time and thought, but from an utter renunciation of self to the calls of art. Donatello, like Turner, could have become as rich as he was honored, had he not kept his gains at the disposition of his friends, who helped themselves from his purse without "being expected to say anything to him;" and he left Padua, where he had every inducement that honor and wealth could offer to keep him, to return to Florence to be among those whose criticisms upon his works might elevate his standard of taste; for he feared the uniform praise of the Paduans would prove rather a source of weakness than strength to him. Actuated by a spirit so superior to sordid gain or ephemeral fame, we are not surprised to find both him and Brunelleschi, in their mutual competition of designs for the bronze doors of the Baptistery, preferring their youthful rival Ghiberti to themselves, and jointly recommending him to the Signory, saying, that it was both "for public advantage and individual benefit to give Ghiberti the opportunity to produce those noble fruits of which his beautiful model gave so fair a hope:" a decision more honorable to their names than if either had conducted the work to a successful issue, and which will cleave to their memories when the door itself shall have passed into nothingness by the pitiless action of time. Work thus inspired could not



fail to be worthy of being visited by concourses of people, such as Vasari,\* writing of the cartoons of Leonardo, says "one sees at the most solemn festivals." Mark that word "solemn." Nothing frivolous in its meaning and connection; it does not stand for amusement, or decoration, or surface-work; but for work that was capable of exalting the feelings and arousing profound thought. And it was always work for the *people*. They sat in constant judgment upon it. And who shall gainsay Leonardo in his assertion, that "a painter ought not to disdain learning from the humblest source," for "although a man may not be an artist he may have just notions of forms?"† *Truth*, TRUTH, from the mouths of babes or prophets, was the motto of such men. Only those may

\* The preceding quotations are from his *Lives of the several artists*.

† The following anecdote from a daily journal is to the point:—

"A few mornings ago, as I was standing admiring—as I confess myself quite fond of doing—that beautiful deer-group ('The Prairie,' a painting by Beard, of Buffalo), a tall, unmistakable western man came up behind me, and looked over my shoulder. I noticed at once the quick stoppage of breathing which always follows admiration; but, to my surprise, the stop was short, and something like a laugh quickly succeeded. Looking up, I saw a yellow face overspreading with a smile, and there was a decided twinkle in the eye.

"'Pshaw,' said he, 'that's no pictur', after all. That a'n't no fair representation.'

"'Why,' said I, 'that struck me as being a pretty good painting.'

"'Maybe it's good enough for a painting,' said the western man; 'I don't say anything ag'in' that; but there never was no scene enacted like it. Just look at that tall rice-grass up there, and the fern-weeds below—who ever saw them grow together? Why, the one grows on wet, and the other on dry land. But that's pretty wet land,' he continued; 'and just see them deer's feet; how clean they be. They ought to be mud up to the knees, and at the gait they're going at, they'd be spotted with mud all over. I tell ye, when I went to that country first, the men skeered me sometimes driving their wagons on to a wet prairie, but they'd tell me it was all right; and sure enough, I would find a good bottom a foot down. And the next thing I know'd, they would be giving a pretty wide berth to a place that looked at first sight exactly like the tother, and I soon found an easy way to tell was by the grasses.'

"'If any on ye know that painter chap,' said the unconsciously keen critic, as he prepared to move off, 'jest tell him, but it's no use,' he said, lowering his voice, 'that's a good enough eity prairie.'

hope to attain it who are actuated by a kindred spirit, void of covetousness, envy, and intrigue, pledged to their high calling, in perfect faith and love; noble of soul in that which makes men at once proud and humble, generous and zealous, conscious of the divinity within, yet content to learn as little children; willing, as one says who well knew the requirements of proficiency, "to endure heat and cold, hunger and thirst, discomfort and privations of all kinds, watching and laboring continually."

Too much stress must not, however, be laid upon a few names as the moving causes of the artistic regeneration of Italy. Beside the greater lights there were hosts of lesser, all over the land, equally sensitive to the impulse of the great mental wave that was swelling higher and higher, and gathering momentum on the ocean of thought. Each contributed some special excellence or idea. Schools, obedient to local influences, alive with the vigorous individualism of the times, everywhere rose into existence. The awakening was universal. No artists need be cited as miracles. Certain ones partook more largely than others of the new-born genius, and more completely and more intensely typified its action. From this cause, and subsequent good fortune of biography and position, their reputations have as it were engulfed much kindred and contemporaneous work, whose authors were also deserving of remembrance. Accordingly it has happened with the world at large, that all art of a certain character is baptized by the name of its most prominent or distinguished representative, who thus perpetuates his personal influence as the head of a distinct school, apart from his position as a leading member of the great national school, of which the former may be classed as a variety. The schools of Masaccio and

Fra Angelico varied greatly, though each formed an important component part of the great Florentine school; just as in our times Turner and Millais, although so distinct in styles and influence, are both classed under the common head of the great modern English school of painting. In Italy, as the student prosecutes his researches, he is constantly discovering new differences of manner, and, in local archives, new names, now forgotten but once in repute. Its prolificness in this respect is indeed wonderful. Every town, nay, almost every hamlet, may boast its artist—not a mere dauber or superficial student, but a man endowed with skill and feeling. Amid such a repletion of wealth, the historian can only quote the best known names, classifying the lesser around the greater.

Still another fact deserves to be kept in view. Although the new movement so thoroughly eclipsed that art which was nourished solely of Theology, yet the influence of the latter more or less affected its style and character for a considerable period; shorter in the Florentine schools, and lingering longer with the Umbrian and Sienese, and not wholly obsolete even as late as Raphael, in whose compositions as well as in those of several of his contemporaries, may be detected traces of Byzantine influences.

Etruria proper, comprising Tuscany and portions of the adjacent Roman States, was the central point of the Italian revival of art. The greatest names of Italy are indigenous to this confined territory. Among them we find Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Galileo, Giotto, Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Masaccio, Raphael, Leonardo, and Michel Angelo—a brilliant host unsurpassed in modern Europe among any peoples. This extraordinary awakening of intellect, after a slumber of more than a decade of centuries, is re-

markable in a geographical and psychological aspect, especially in the strength of its nationality, which, although inspired by new motives in its art, still clung tenaciously to the primary characteristics of its most ancient manifestations. These were highly naturalistic as distinguished from the idealism of Greece, and not as in the Lombard and Venetian states running into the Oriental taste for warm coloring, nor indulging, as did their neighbors to a certain extent, in Teutonic hardness, precision, and minuteness of detail. But before proceeding to the artists themselves, it will facilitate the understanding of future descriptions to briefly explain some of the technical processes involved.

Painting in tempera derives its name from the fact that the colors are "tempered" with a vehicle, not simply oil or water, but some glutinous substance, as the yolk of stale or fresh eggs, milk, gums, etc., to a consistence easy of application and adherence. Wine was a common diluent for the viscid mediums of tempera painting, and also the juice of the fig-tree, and even vinegar and oil to a limited extent. It was by the skill in mixture and use of these several ingredients that the firm surface of the tempera paintings of the old masters, capable even of resisting ordinary solvents, was obtained. The most permanent method of painting was the encaustic, or colors prepared with wax subjected to heat. This was the Byzantine process, derived from remote antiquity, and valuable for its resistance to the effects of time and atmosphere, its superior gloss, and capacity for depth and richness of colors. The chief objection to it is its shiny surface; a state common to tempera paintings to which hard varnishes have been applied. Yet without some medium of this character it is difficult to adequately protect their delicate surfaces, and bring out the full value of their clear,

positive hues. Perhaps glass is the best agent for the former purpose. Those whose taste has been formed exclusively by the superior transparency, luminousness, and richness of oil painting, with its magical illusions of light and shade, mysterious melting of form into color, greater capacity of imitation, and more manageable tones, have at first small relish for the precision of outline, gem-like hues, and intense, full light of its ancient rival, especially in its pristine superabundance of gold ornament, which, unless toned by age or local effect, reflects the light, and by its intense brilliancy injures the general harmony of the painting. But as we trace the progress of art, we shall find that tempera and fresco painting also have peculiar claims upon our consideration and admiration.

Fresco painting is so styled from the colors being rapidly laid on while the freshly prepared plaster is still wet. The fresco painter is limited to those colors which light and lime will not deteriorate. These are natural colors, or earths sober in hue; blue being his brightest resource. He has not the same compass of depth, transparency, fusion, gradation, and force of shadow as the oil painter; but his superiority consists in his breadth of execution, brilliancy of light, greater facility of representing large compositions under equal conditions of happy effect, avoiding the confused glare or reflection of extensive oil surfaces, and of in general an unchangeableness, a liveliness, and naturalness of tone and expression which the latter does not equal on a similar scale.

There are also two other methods of wall-painting: *seco*, or with colors when the plaster has been dried and wetted again, and in distemper, or without lime on a dry wall.

Easel pictures and altar-pieces were painted on wood,



or prepared grounds of *gesso* or lime, polished to the hardness and smoothness of marble. Margaritone and some others were accustomed to cover their panels with a strong canvas attached to them by glue.

The ancients were unacquainted with oil painting. Canvas was first used, so far as we know, in the time of Nero.\* Gold backgrounds and lavish ornamentation were legacies of the Latin and Byzantine schools. These were varied and enriched by the later masters, some of whom indulged in golden draperies and other accessories in relief. While such a taste lasted, there could be no proper landscape. This was in general merely suggested, after a most conventional manner; one aim of the artists being to exalt and adorn their sacred personages by beauty and value of material, which with them had a symbolic meaning.

The practice of writing names and sentences upon pictures, sometimes making words to issue from the mouths of their figures, was derived from remote classical antiquity. Gothic letters came into vogue about A. D. 1200, and were in fashion until the middle of the fourteenth century, when Roman characters were again used. Inscriptions were most abundant among the Byzantine and Latin artists, who never thought it expedient to leave any room for doubt as to their topics.

Pictures on wood intended for altar-pieces were made up after elaborate architectural designs, corresponding to their intended localities, and having a general resemblance to the façades of Gothic cathedrals. The preparation of the

\* Those who are curious in the technicalities of art will find much information about ancient and modern methods in Cennino Cennini's *Trattato della Pittura*, MS. 1437, and *Painting Popularly Explained*, London, 1859, a useful treatise by Messrs. Gulick and Timbs, F. S. A.

wood for the painter was the specialty of artisans who took rank with the artists themselves. These carvers and gilders were so proud of their skill as often to inscribe their names upon their work before those of the painter.\* On account of the great size of the pictures intended for public places they were built up in distinct parts, nicely fitted to each other, separated and supported by twisted columns, and each end strengthened by a sort of buttress, divided into various stories, all being arranged for architectural effect. Smaller pictures, generally of single saints, were let into these buttresses on their several sides, in the shape of pointed windows, while above the main body of the altar-piece were introduced circular paintings — generally of the Annunciation, Christ, or the Almighty — answering to wheel windows, or separate tabernacles having more elaborate compositions, with pointed arch, turret, scroll, and spire, giving to the entire picture an impressive monumental look; and which was further enriched by a great variety of ornamental details in gilded relief. Beneath all, in large characters, were inscribed the names of the saints or artists, and the date of its completion, to which on either wing were added the arms of the male and female branches of the family that ordered it. It was also common to introduce their portraits, at first simply kneeling in devotion in their proper costume, but subsequently in the persons of the sacred personages who figured in the composition. But the picture was incomplete without a “gradino” or “predella,” as the step or platform on which it was supported was called, the panels of which being painted in small size with the sacred histories, martyrdoms, or what-

\* Lanzi, vol. i. p. 56, Bohn, London.

ever subjects were related to the main composition. As this was nearly on the level of the eye of the spectator, the artist was incited to display upon it his greatest skill in fine detail. It is rare now to find a complete altarpiece of this character; in most examples the "gradino," and top-pieces, having been abstracted or ruined.

This style of pictorial Gothic architecture continued in fashion until the influence of revived classical art introduced for the framework of pictures, horizontal lines and right angles, instead of perpendicular and acute. Buttresses, columns, and spires were superseded by pilasters, capitals, and heavy cornices, or other accessories borrowed from the style of architecture of the day. Grotesques, in gilt low or half relief; arabesques, heavy borders, and designs, imitated from the antique and foreign to Christian sentiment, sometimes on blue grounds, became the favorite style of ornament for frames, which in Italy have always been an object of artistic consideration second only to the pictures themselves; in many cases the greatest artists designing them for their own works. Ghirlandajo and his school carried this classical innovation of designs for the adornment of frames still further, venturing to adopt the same principle for the ornamental accessories of their pictures, filling them with beautifully executed details of architecture, figures in chiaroscuro, or richly gilt and colored projection, and other fancies chiefly drawn from pagan sources. Others, with the same taste for varied ornament, more consistently drew their emblematic designs from Christian thought; adorning picture or frame, without particular reference to the subject of their compositions, with seraphs and cherubs, angels or flowers, in preference to the satyrs, fauns, and kindred conceptions of the heathen

mind. Whenever time has spared the original settings of the pictures of the golden periods of Italian art, we find them elaborated to a degree of richness that surprises modern taste, not unfrequently exceeding the first cost of the painting itself.

## CHAPTER IV.

The prevailing Style of Painting in the Thirteenth Century. The Artists that illustrated it. Giovanni, 960. Petrolino, 1110. Berlinghieri, of Lucca, 1235. Bastard Byzantine style. Genuine do. Native Italian School. Examples of each. Giunta da Pisa, 1202-1255. Margaritone, of Arezzo, 1236-1313. The transition Painters. Diotisalvi, 1227-1250, Ugolino, 1280-1339, and Guido, 1220, of Siena. Tafi, 1213-1291, and Gaddo Gaddi, 1289-1312, of Florence. The Italianized Greek Artists and School. Apollonius. Duccio, of Buoninsegna, 1282-1339. Cimabue, 1240-1302. The new Relation of the Church to Art. Plan of Analysis.

AT the dawn of the thirteenth century a mixed Latin and Byzantine style, in general exceedingly rude and barbarous, was the prevailing fashion of painting in Italy. Consecrated, however, by religious authority and antiquity, it had a deep hold in the veneration of the people. Pictures partook of the coarse features of the mosaics of this period; hard, heavy outlines, bold features, shadowless, and without projection or perspective. The earliest names that have reached us of the Italian school, are, one Giovanni, renowned, as art then was, in the year 960, and Petrolino, who flourished in 1110, and painted frescoes, of which remains still exist in the church of St. Qautri Coronati at Rome, in company with Guido Guiduccio. Eraclius, a Roman painter, who wrote a treatise on art in the tenth or eleventh century, is also mentioned. Besides these we have Berlinghieri, of Lucca, 1235, of whose attenuated, graceless style, a few specimens still exist. No doubt other names might be disinterred from the antiquarianism of art,



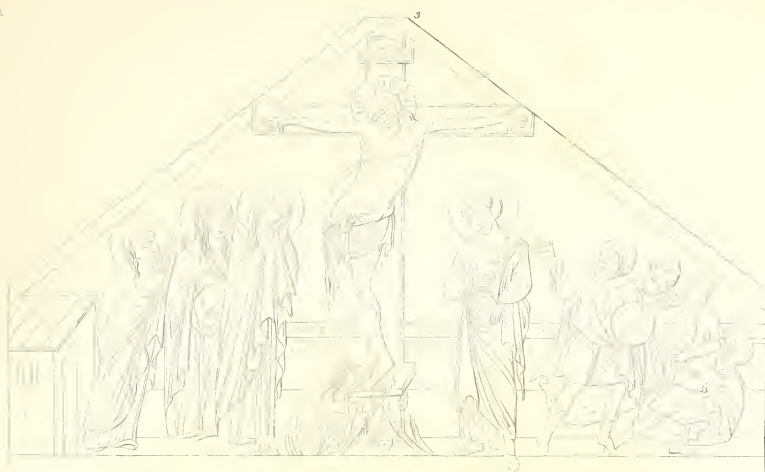
but they would give no clue to any better work prevailing than the standard illustrated by the above artists, which was as meagre as could be. They show, however, that art of some kind or other was always in vogue and also had its literature.

Equally common, and quite distinct from the above, was the bastard Byzantine manner, overladen with golden ornament, rigid and angular in drapery, crude in design, and gaudy in color, with nothing either in sentiment or execution to recommend it, yet very popular, and indicative of the utter want of æsthetic feeling in the people at large. One example of this art is a specimen of the whole, for they were all manufactured after one rule and motive. The best Byzantine, however, was not without traces of the traditions of old Greek art in its fulness of contours, largeness and grace of outline, amplitude of drapery, and judicious use of ornament; its roundness of forms contrasting favorably with the Latin meagreness of design, and absence of symmetry or proportion. Evidently, the ancient ideal had never wholly forsaken the art of Greece, although moulded into novel compositions by the peculiar mysticism that then ruled art. The Byzantine triptych of the twelfth century (pl. A, fig. 1) is one of the finest specimens of this type of painting that we know. The faces have much beauty, and the movements are vigorous and not ungraceful, especially the central portion, in which Christ is seen in Hades, surrounded by the patriarchs and prophets, taking Adam and Eve by the hand, while Satan, breathing fire, has been cast into the bottomless pit, and the keys of hell thrown after him.

The "Transfiguration" given in the right wing is highly dramatic in action and mystic in motive. Christ, a dignified, grand figure, surrounded by an aureola from which







Crucifixion, Pisa 1272-1275



Coronation of the Virgin, 1270-1280



Bazaar in the Temple, circa 1100-1200

The Knight of the Cross





dart triune rays, the two signifying eternity and trinity, appears with Moses and Elias in a "bright cloud," which "overshadows" Peter, James, and John. The mysterious voice they have just heard, saying "This is my beloved Son—hear ye him," has made them "sore afraid," and they literally "fall on their faces," as reads the Scripture. Two of them in the sudden violence of their movements, have thrown off their sandals. Their faces admirably express the conflicting emotions of awe, fear, and faith, which have taken possession of them. Although so minute in size, the artist has succeeded in giving these paintings the force of large compositions, introducing a naturalness, animation, and variety, especially in the movements and the expression of emotions, rarely to be found in the paintings of this school, at the same time bestowing upon them a fineness of finish and delicacy of touch, that rival the best efforts of the Italian miniaturists of the school of Fra Angelico.

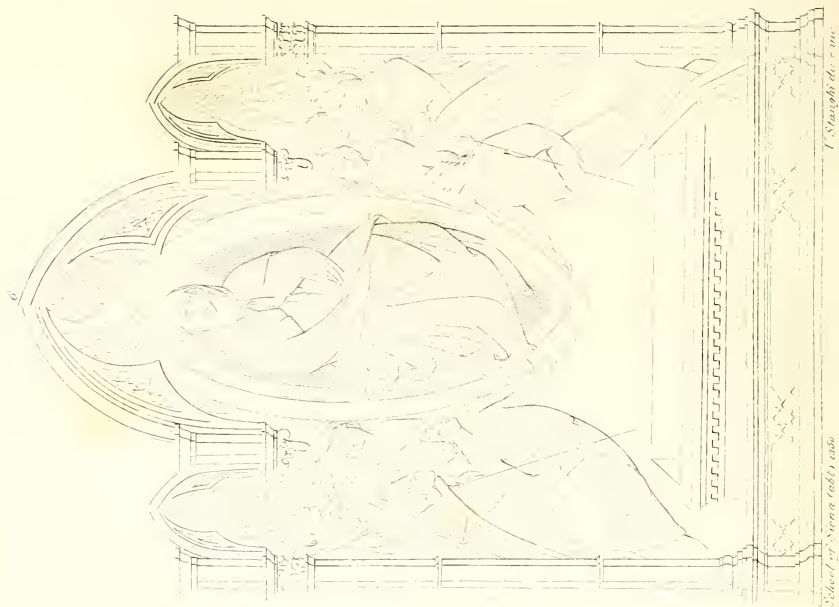
Of equal beauty with this specimen, though not of as fine execution, is pl. B, fig. 4, a mystical painting, representing the apotheosis of the Virgin and the triumph of Christianity. Christ and Mary—the mother adoring the son—are surrounded by angels and the mystical powers of heaven, glorifying Him, who carries in his hand the symbol of the beginning and end of all things. Above is a separate picture representing the triumph of the new and the passing away of the old dispensation, the baptism of water succeeding the sacrifice by fire. This picture is remarkable for the elevated character of its heads, that of Christ being the primitive Byzantine ideal, the full contours of the drapery, and its pale coloring, which tone descended to the Giotteschi for a time. It is supposed to date from

1190 to 1210,\* and shows conclusively that Cimabue and his contemporaries were not without other favorable examples for their instruction, beside those frescoes done by the same class of Italianized Greek artists in the lower cloisters of Santa Maria Novella at Florence, and which served as a school for the incipient native talent of that time.

The contrast between this painting and that of Giunta da Pisa (pl. A, fig. 3) is very marked. Giunta lived between 1202 and 1255, but borrowed no inspiration from pure Byzantine art. He is emphatically Etruscan in feeling, dramatic, with a vigorous tone of color and design, very rude in both, and while adhering, in a slight use of gold in his draperies, to the degenerated Byzantine style, yet quite emancipated from it in more important respects. In his type of Christ he adheres to the authority of St. Cyril and other eminent fathers of the Church, who maintained that, according to the Psalms, the Saviour was the least comely of men, and should be so represented by art. Other ecclesiastical writers of equal weight of opinion had, however, sustained the contrary, that Christ should be made as beautiful as possible. And the earliest representations of the Saviour evidently aim at an ideal type of manly beauty and spiritualized expression of features. Of such an ideal character are the forms of the Saviour given in the Byzantine paintings before described, while in this of Giunta and the ordinary Italian type of this period there seems to be, beside the unavoidable effects of ignorance of design, a desire to render the person of the Redeemer as ungainly and repulsive as possible; that being in literal correspondence with the texts of Scripture which prophesy the advent of the Man of Sorrows.

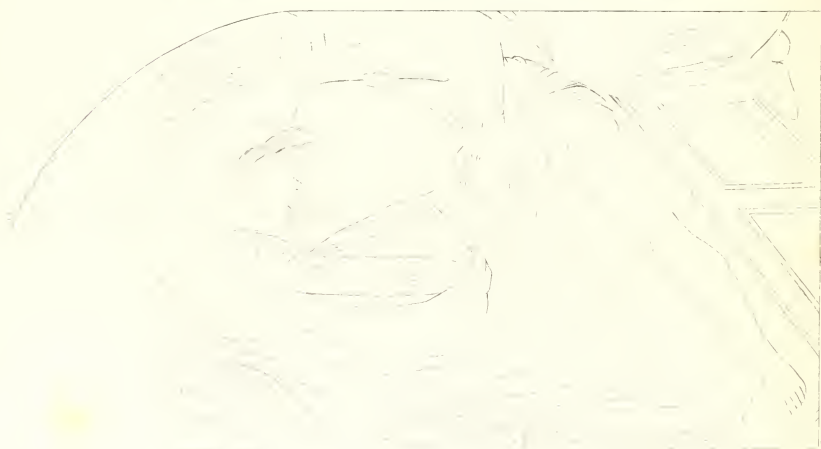
\* See engraving and description, vol. xiii. pl. 1500, Fumigalli's *Musco di Pittura*, &c. Florence, 1841.



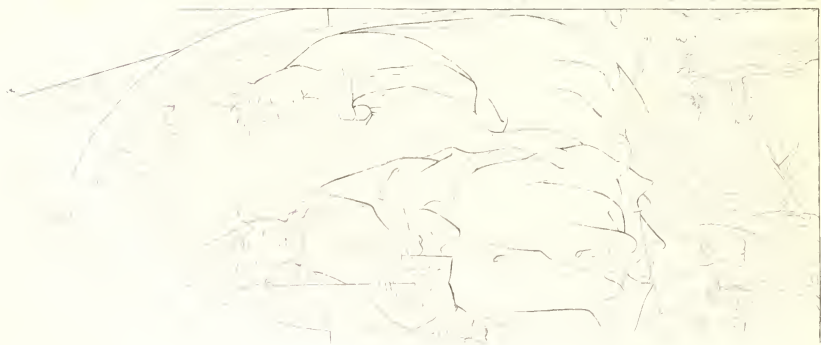


1. Stupido de 1 m.

2. Stupido de 1 m. 1/2.



3. Stupido de 1 m. 1/2.



4. Stupido de 1 m. 1/2.







The common Italian standard of painting and composition of this epoch is graphically represented in pl. A, fig. 2, an altar-piece by Margaritone, of Arezzo, (1286-1313.) He is the real starting-point of the mediæval schools of Italy in painting, embodying the peculiarities of design, coloring, and motive which rendered it so stationary and unprofitable. His picture is a veritable curiosity, and yet not without some merit in the smaller figures, when compared with the work of those painters by whom he was accounted a "master." Margaritone was a conservative in art, and so became disgusted with the progress manifested by youthful rivals, which he had neither the courage nor talent to follow. Yet as an architect and sculptor he showed evidence of a better spirit, manifesting in both the rising influence of Niccola Pisano. With him closed the period of utter decadence of painting, and we may view him with the more curiosity and sympathy from the consciousness that the world will never look upon his like again.

We now pass on to the transition period preparatory to Giotto. A number of artists appear, partaking of the new-born influences of progress, and still clinging in many details and motives to preceding examples. Each of them, in greater or less degree, adhered to the profuse use of gold in draperies, stiff, angular folds, and general characteristics of the Byzantine style; and while arriving at greater dignity and grander expression, although evincing a technical education based on that, they ennobled art by the loftier inspirations of their own minds. In details, some of these artists equalled Giotto. Indeed, in their best Madonnas, there is a prophetic largeness of soul that shows how deeply the divine conception of her character had penetrated their hearts. They paint for us, not nursing mothers, but ab-

solute Queens of Heaven, exalted by a holiness freely vouchsafed by the power of the Son.

Of this class of artists we find examples in Diotisalvi, (1227-1250,) Guido, (about 1221,) and Ugolino, (1280-1339,) of Siena, and Andrea Tafi, (1213-1291,) and Gaddo Gaddi, (1239-1312,) of Florence. Tafi was a mosaicist, and was taught his art by the Byzantine artists then employed in decorating the church of San Marco at Venice, one of whom, Apollonius, was persuaded to return with him to Florence, where the two executed those rude but forcible mosaics still in perfect condition on the dome of the Baptistery. Gaddo Gaddi, the progenitor of the distinguished family of that name, became his pupil, and has left us specimens of his skill in the Duomo. Of their paintings there is now no trace. Guido and Ugolino may be ranked as superior to them in grace and expression. But greater than all, equal in execution to Giotto, more intensely imbued with the religious sentiment, a truly great master, was Duccio of Buoninsegna, (1282-1339.) His masterpiece, a picture of numerous compositions, hangs in a dim light in the Duomo of Siena. But few of his works have survived, and away from Siena we have but small opportunity to judge of his merits. The group (pl. C, fig. 9) taken from a diptych gives some idea of his characteristics, for it was in small compositions that he excelled. It has carefully-drawn extremities, symmetrical figures, simple adjustment of draperies, strong coloring, the Byzantine taste of adornment, great feeling, and a dramatic action, indicative of original conception. Like Giotto he borrows no thought from others, but invests his scenes with a force and variety peculiarly his own. On the right of the picture is the Virgin fainting at the sight of her crucified son. She is upheld by attendant women, whose grief is admirably

expressed, without running into the usual caricature of the period. Some with clasped hands and agonized features watch her sinking form, so absorbed in the sorrow of the mother as seemingly to forget the torture of the Saviour. By a sentiment as touching as rare, indicative of the consciousness on the part of these faithful women of the true character of Jesus and the *intent* of his cruel death, others are made to appeal to Him with uplifted hands and eager looks, to save and protect Her in this dark hour; they feel that *himself*, at any moment, he may save, by calling upon the angels of the Father. "Thy will be done" has penetrated their hearts. Christ voluntarily drains the cup, but why may not the *mother* be spared! Such is the meaning of this simple composition, which, small as it is, embraces more true and varied feeling, better action, and a deeper religious sentiment than we find in the later treatment of this subject by many of the great masters of design.

In the picture itself, angels hover about the cross, catching, in golden chalices, the precious blood that flows from the wounds of the Saviour. The Roman soldiery watch the unusual spectacle with mingled sympathy and curiosity. One of them turns astonished and reproachfully to the centurion Longinus—the nimbus showing that the Church has made him a saint—who, carried away by "those things that were done," is represented as exclaiming "Truly this was the Son of God." In the companion picture, the Madonna, a figure of much dignity, sits enthroned, surrounded by angels worshipping the infant Jesus, who stands in her lap. Their attitudes and expressions are unspeakably devout.

Duccio's remarkable power rests not only in his being thoroughly imbued with the spirit of his subject, but also in his capacity of bestowing individual character, and presenting both in a poetical, harmonious whole. His influence and

fame were, however, strictly local, which is the more singular when it is considered what a widely extended reputation some of the Giotteschi secured, whose invention, feeling for beauty, and depth and delicacy of sentiment were so greatly inferior to his. If he painted frescoes, which were the true medium of fame, none have been recorded, and this may account for his comparative obscurity, notwithstanding the great merit of his small compositions.

Byzantine influences and execution are traceable much later than the above artists, yet as they became so overpowered by fresher motives and more vigorous execution, we may with Cimabue consider the transition period at an end. This artist, whose name is a byword to mark a specific epoch in art, was, as we have seen, but one of many to inaugurate its new phase. He was born at Florence in 1240, and died in 1302. His emancipation, in a technical point of view, from the trammels of previous art was but gradual, as will be noticed by his large altar-piece in the Florentine Academy, which evinces crude design, Byzantine ornamentation, and weak color, yet withal has a certain grandeur of expression, without any feeling for beauty. Cimabue, however, ultimately developed an independent style, improved draperies, grouped his figures with animation and vigor, and in his best work was solemn and dignified. The celebrated Madonna of Santa Maria Novella, at Florence, is the most favorable example of his best manner now extant. Even in this, we perceive that he never attained any skill in perspective or foreshortening, and chiaroscuro was wholly unknown to him. Still there is a grandeur about him that savors of Michel Angelo. His heads have a deep, earnest character, and are fairly individualized, while his smaller figures, often sadly out of draw-

ing in height and proportions, are done with much finish and expression. Like almost all the early masters, he found it difficult to treat hands and feet, which are seldom good even in Giotto, and in Cimabue are stiff or attenuated to a ludicrous degree.\* In the infancy of design, the extremities from their rigidity might be supposed to be all bone; in the decadence, with that class of painters represented by Empoli, Bilivert, and the scholars of Carlo Dolce, hands became mere flabby masses, without bone, though well colored. When the subject admitted it, the old painters were glad to hide extremities by drapery, in which they had more strength. Cimabue was so proud and sensitive that he often destroyed his pictures when faults were detected in them. We may smile and wonder how any escaped. But in judging of the past, we should not look *back* upon it from our point of view, but forward to it from its *past*, and so detect its progress.

Cimabue, in conjunction with Arnolfo Lapi, was one of the architects of the Duomo. But his name is chiefly associated with his two immortal pupils. One of these in painting was Dante, who is said to have drawn well. Boccaccio confirms this, and the poet himself, in his "*Vita Nuova*," alludes to it. "*Quale ricordandomi di lei disegnava un angelo sopra certe tavola.*" "*Whiles I thought of her (Beatrice) I drew an angel.*" What would not the world give to have now in its possession an angel painted by Dante, inspired by his vision of the celestial Beatrice!

But Cimabue's chief claim upon posterity, lies in his prophetic insight into the genius of the poverty-stricken shepherd boy, whom he found on a wild hill-side, drawing a spirited sketch of one of his sheep on a stone, with some rough object snatched from mother-earth. This seem-

\* See pl. C, fig. 10, St. John.



ingly accidental discovery revealed to him the future MASTER. At once he rescued him from tending brutes to the high office of teaching men. All thanks for this, Giovanni Cimabue! a noble by birth; nobler by art; and noblest by his perception!

If art had heretofore owed much of its degradation to the unwise restrictions of theology, it now entered upon a period of progress sustained and encouraged by the Church, which itself partook of the new-born liberty of thought, and from its law-giver became its patron. Indeed she, herself, furnished many distinguished names to the profession. The Dominicans particularly were foremost in art, especially in architecture and painting, as the Benedictines were in literature. In every age of the world, Pagan or Christian, the master-works of art have sprung from religious inspiration. Phidias, Zeuxis, Giotto, Leonardo, Raphael, Michel Angelo, and even Titian confirm this fact. Nor can it ever be otherwise, for religion includes all that is noblest in humanity on earth and most glorious in its future. Hence at the period we are now about to explore, the religious feeling being both comparatively free and active, art gave itself willingly to its inspiration. Among the numberless examples which could be cited to show its prolificness, created by the demands of the Church alone, that of the cathedral of Chartres will suffice. It was adorned with more than nine thousand painted and carved figures, giving, in chronological series, the biblical histories from the creation to the end of the world. In all epochs some degree of dictation is felt by art. If not religious, it springs from fashion, caprice, ambition, or vanity; any or all of the fountains of human weakness. But it is simple justice now to record, that at no former period had art been more free to follow its native im-

pulses, and under purer inspirations, than at that which now awaits us.

The controlling principle of art being still in religion, the plan of analysis will be to trace its varied elements through its leading minds, grouping them according to their specific characteristics, confining ourselves almost entirely to Etruscan ground. The Umbrian, Sienese, and Florentine schools, with their offshoots, have a family likeness. Whether an artist be of Cortona, Pisa, Volterra, Citta della Piève, or other of the numerous cities that cover this classical soil, he interblends with the national proclivities, easily finding a congenial home in any portion of this territory. Many great artists were not, by birth, of the cities to which their fame is now inseparably attached, and whose schools they founded. In an age when towns a few miles apart mutually held each other to be foreigners and enemies, artists enjoyed a common home everywhere. As, however, the distinctions of locality or birth are accidental, we shall endeavor to hold to permanent and universal principles as a means of classification. This will be the easier, inasmuch as, during long periods, specific styles and methods obtained in certain localities, in entire harmony with the moral and intellectual features of their art.

## CHAPTER V.

Giotto, 1276-1336. His Person and Character. The Representative Artist. Elements of the new Progress. Niccola Pisano, 1205-1273. Sculpture in the School of the Pisani as related to Painting in the Thirteenth Century. Analysis of Giotto's Merits. His Connection with Dante. Character of their Times. Their opposite Tempers. Anecdotes of the Poet and Artist. Giotto's Portrait of Dante. How it was discovered. Legends of Art, credible and otherwise. The Poetry of Giotto. Epic and Lyric Painting. Giotto's Relation to the former Phase, and his Influence upon Art as a Whole until the Epoch of Masaccio.

NATURE, when her soil craves seed, drops her acorns by the road-side, unnoticed and uncared for. But soon the lusty oak succeeds to the little acorn, and we marvel at its beauty, rejoice in its shade, and protect ourselves by its strength. Thus have arisen many of the world's best names. Manger or sheepfold, in poverty, wanderings, and wilderness—out of such beginnings have grown noble endings. The gulf is wide between Giotto the companion of sheep and Giotto the friend of Dante and Petrarch, the well-beloved of popes, princes, and peoples! Yet he bridged it over by one of the fairest fabrics ever raised by man; not only beautiful but permanent; so that we of the nineteenth century know him and love him almost as well as his associates of the thirteenth. His career was so sunny and fertilizing that we may well wonder thereat. Whence his continuous happiness and success while Dante was in exile and sorrow? How was it that amid turbulence and faction he was always peaceful and prosperous?

Why was it that rival cities from Naples to Avignon—Rome, Assisi, Verona, Florence, Padua, and many others—disagreeing as they might in every other respect, were always of one accord in honoring and esteeming him, happy if they could secure his presence among them and his handwriting upon their walls?

Peace, progress, prosperity, each adopted him. Never were nature and fortune in more amiable conjunction than when Giotto was born. The former endowed him with the gifts which form the poet, engineer,\* architect, sculptor, and painter; the latter provided him with the opportunity and means of development. But nature was kinder still in adding to genius the innate credentials of the Christian gentleman, which were so well sustained throughout his brilliant career as to make him the favorite of all classes and opinions. Although by birth of the humblest rank, he became the accomplished courtier, and that without forfeiting the confidence and good-will of those who neither loved nor trusted the aristocracy. To thoroughly appreciate his social virtues, we must, before parting from him, contrast his character with the spirit and deeds of the age; from which spectacle we shall extract the trite but never too often to be repeated lesson, of the power of the superior sentiments, under all circumstances, when backed by amiability and sound principle, like oil upon stormy waters, to assuage evil passions, and to triumph over physical force.

There was in Giotto a magnetism of presence, emanating from a kindly superiority of heart as well as mind, that was irresistible. Free from that professional jealousy which disturbs the hearts and impedes the talents of so

\* He was employed by the Florentines to superintend the erection of their walls and fortifications. See Baldinucci, vol. i. p. 117. Firenze, 1847.

many otherwise great artists, he sought occasions to promote the welfare of others, without wounding their spirits. When he was at Naples in 1327, one Simone, a painter, had up to that time enjoyed no inconsiderable reputation. But the superior accomplishments and engaging manners of Giotto so eclipsed him, that he came to be wellnigh forgotten. This fickleness of fortune preyed upon his mind, and made him ill. Yet he was too high-spirited to complain, and too honorable not to add his testimony to the merits of his unconscious rival, while maintaining that his own works were deserving of notice. Determining to reinstate himself in popular favor upon the only basis which a true artist values, he placed some of his pictures where Giotto could see them. The result justified his opinion of himself. Giotto was so much struck with their good qualities that he at once warmly recommended him to King Robert, by whom he was promptly and generously patronized. With restored credit, his health returned, and he flourished at Naples for many years, becoming a disciple of his benefactor, imitating his style, and transmitting it to several generations of followers.

All the world knows that Cimabue adopted Giotto, taught him what he knew, and, notwithstanding the proud, sensitive nature of the master, we can find no trace of other than the most generous feelings towards his pupil, who, as he could not help foreseeing, was destined to eclipse the reputation of which he was so jealous. The same warm friendship which he secured to himself as a pupil, when he became a master he received from his pupils; the greatest of whom were content to continue under him, after they had arrived at the same dignity themselves, while he lived, and, after his death, continued to shine only in the degree that they had gained light from the system of

which Giotto was the sun. In this relation, Puccio Cappanna, although an older man, remained with him forty years, desirous only of instruction, and Taddeo Gaddi for twenty-four. Stefano, Simone Martini, and other eminent artists have been classed as pupils of his, but without sufficient proof. The fact, however, shows the extent and weight of Giotto's reputation, which for centuries has not only held its own ground, but by popular prejudice been swelled to some extent at the expense of others.

Giotto was diligent in all things; a hard worker, not permitting genius to lull him into ease, or frame excuses for slackness of hand. His studio was a veritable workshop. Although laden with self-earned honors and riches, his industry never slackened. Prosperity was loyal to him to the end. Notwithstanding his numerous works, spread from the Rhone to Vesuvius, from the Adriatic to the Tyrrhenian Sea, in every department of painting as then practised, not to mention other branches of art, he found time to enjoy life after the manner of large-hearted, generous instincts, in which the ascetic tendencies of his time found no sympathetic narrowness of soul. Few artists have accomplished as much; fewer still have equalled him in comprehensive genius. Beside fresco and tempera painting, he practised with equal success the art of the mosaicist and miniaturist. Michel Angelo bestowed great praise upon his graphic truth, especially in his group of apostles around the dying Virgin, whose soul, according to the beautiful idea of the age, Christ is holding in his arms in the shape of a new-born infant, welcomed by him, with a deeper than maternal joy, into the existence prepared from the beginning for the blessed. This work has been highly prized by artists of every generation. But to go back to his earliest effort. The rude sketch of the sheep



in the solitude of the wilderness, done by the boy of twelve years, without other impulse or teacher than the soul within and the nature without him, had in it the embryo of that noble Campanile which still remains in all its pristine loveliness, his monument and his country's joy. In view, therefore, of the precedents of Giotto in art, as we now recall his career, we may justly consider him the type of a coming great and important epoch; the Representative man of its unfolded Progress. Welcome Giotto!

To comprehend this incipient progress, it is necessary to gather up its elements, and to inquire what relation Giotto bore to it. One of its chief features was its eclecticism. It went to every accessible source for instruction and inspiration — mark, not for *imitation*, which was the bane of the later-born art of Italy, but for knowledge. And it was well at this juncture, and for two centuries later, that so little classical art had been disinterred; enough for hints or suggestions, but not enough for corruption. As late as 1450, Poggio Bracciolini found only six antique statues in Rome. Among the first lessons to which it gave heed was the scanty example of classical art, fragmentary and cropping out of the ruins of ancient civilization, like gold veins in the quartz rock, but significant of much treasure yet unseen. Pisan adventurers of the eleventh century had brought with other objects from the East a Grecian sarcophagus, on which was carved the story of Ippolito and Fedra, and which was subsequently appropriated to hold the ashes of Beatrice, mother of the famous Countess Matilda. Its captors little foresaw that, in that single piece of sculpture, of a quality common enough where they got it, though not the best Greek work, there was quietly reposing an entire revolution in the art of Italy. But so it was. And we may now not only look

with more than common interest upon this relic — transferred in this century from its first locality beside the door of the Duomo to the Campo Santo — for the service it rendered, but see in it one of those simple though mysterious hints of Providence, which, when the fulness of time arrives, passes into the minds of men, developing great results. Newton watched an apple fall, and, as it were by the inspiration of Nature herself, detected in it the secret of a profound law. Niccola Pisano (1205–1278), sculptor and architect, by chance seeing the Pisan sarcophagus, was penetrated at once with the beauty and spirit of Greek art. Immediately he made studies from the nude figures and draperies, and so improved his taste and knowledge of design that he became, of his time, the first in attainments as he was in genius. To him, above all others, is to be ascribed the great merit of having led the way to the revival of art generally. Indeed, his influence on sculpture may be classed with that of Giotto on painting. Their calibre of mind and purity of taste were much the same. Niccola, however, preceded Giotto an entire generation, dying just as the latter was born, giving to sculpture that impetus of improvement in which its sister art was still deficient, and for which, in no small degree, it was ultimately indebted to the examples in sculpture of Niccola and his immediate successors, Giovanni (1274–1320) and Andrea Pisani (1276–1345), neither of whom, however, was his rival in invention or execution. The works he left are remarkable for their happy combination of the rules of Greek taste with the superior motives of Christian art, and are distinguished for refined feeling, dignified action, and poetic expression. Besides a keen perception of truth and beauty in art or nature, with the faculty of drawing thence, and amalgamating into his own work,

whatever was excellent, improving from without being restricted by models, this great man, chiefly in the pulpits of the Baptistery at Pisa, the Cathedral at Siena, and the shrine of St. Dominic at Bologna, gives more evidence of an originality, nobility, force, feeling, variety, and beauty of composition, with lighter admixture of the technical defects of the age, and restraint of theological motives, than any other artist except Giotto. The earlier artists did not fall into the fatal error of the Renaissance, and beside the forms plagiarize the inspirations of paganism. Whatever they were able to appreciate of its superior artistic expression, they sought to incorporate into their own works, the spirit of which was deeply imbued with the religious sentiment of their epoch. Hence, although the influence of classical art by means of the school created by Niccola was widely felt, yet it was chiefly through its æsthetic principles. Its principal improvements were in the accessories of composition, greater simplicity and more grace and elegance of drapery, breadth of manner, unity, and harmony, with a subjection of details to principals; while the general feeling was thoroughly Christian in its Gothic aspect of upright, heavenward lines and arches, whose spiritual aspiration is the antithesis of the right-angular, heavily corniced Grecian masses.

It is difficult to decide to what extent Giotto was indebted to the progress made by Niccola for his own. He does not exhibit so decided a classical feeling as do the Pisani. Still it is traceable, though in an inferior degree to that element, guided by his own intuitions, which is so perceptible in him that it may be set down as his positive trait; that is, his direct study of nature. And herein lies his main contribution to the new Progress. His style in this respect contrasted so favorably with his antecedents

in painting, that Boccaccio, in his enthusiastic admiration, said that Nature produced nothing that Giotto could not imitate even to illusion; a criticism which provokes a smile if considered in the light of the more scientific design of our day, but which seemed not overstrained then. In one of his frescoes at Assisi, Giotto represents a thirsty man bending over a fountain to drink. This is perhaps the earliest of the innovations of pure naturalism in strictly religious art, intended simply as a pleasing accessory, the chief attention being concentrated upon St. Francis in the mid-distance praying for the miraculous flow of waters.

Indeed, Giotto is emphatically naturalistic; the representative beginning of the excellence in this respect of the Tuscan schools. But his naturalism is more apparent in motive than execution, especially in color. In this respect, in his earlier works, he appears to have been influenced by the weak and conventional qualities of his predecessors, and to have transmitted them to many of his disciples.

The impress of a strong individuality is decidedly marked in his copious and suggestive compositions. He tells his stories in brief, simple touches, full of quiet dignity and rich meaning. We find, however, in his works, much of the old ignorance of design, long, half-closed eyes and near together, heavy outlines, flat figures, as if cut out of cards, extremities rudely drawn, want of anatomical knowledge, crude perspective, or rather none beyond the faintest suggestion: faults which in greater or less degree survived him through several generations of artists. Indeed, in judging of the art of the Giotteschi, as his scholars are termed, we have to consider, not their inferiority in these points to the school of Masaccio, but their superiority

to their starting-point in technical knowledge. By such a comparison we are enabled not only rightly to estimate the actual advances made, but to avoid an exaggeration of our own standard of excellence, which centuries hence may be as far beneath that then existing, as the design of the thirteenth century is inferior to ours. That which most concerns us to note, especially in Giotto, is nobility of thought, dramatic energy, fertile invention, and above all, truth of conception, giving to his subjects, whose masses are beautifully disposed and well balanced, great accuracy of expression. He thus graphically realizes his idea as a whole, with a picturesque and harmonious variety of minor motives singularly touching and effective, giving a lofty opinion of his poetical power.\*

In the series of small pictures by Giotto in the Florentine Academy there are several pertinent specimens of his peculiar merits. One of the best is the "Last Supper." Giotto has grouped the apostles *around* the table, a form of composition avoided by almost every one else, and particularly difficult in the infancy of knowledge of perspective. Christ sits at the upper end. John leans upon his bosom. Judas, at the prophetic exclamation of his Master, has suddenly turned his face from him, with a look of vile apprehension, and partly fronting the spectator, conceals his sinister emotion from his brethren. The other apostles are admirably individualized, each moved by a common sentiment of surprise, indignation, love, and sorrow, manifested in dramatic unity, yet with a variety of gesture and expression, such as has not been rivalled, until we arrive at that which

\* Pl. B, fig. 5, illustrates his general characteristics of design and color, and is largely imbued with his religious sentiment. Pl. D, fig. 12, a beautiful Triptych, closely resembles his manner, with less strength of design but greater vivacity of coloring, indicative of a more northern parentage.



stands preëminent in art, the "Cenacolo" of Leonardo. Judging Giotto by the invention and power of this little picture, he bridges over the gulf of centuries that separates him from the more pretentious ones of the contemporaries of Raphael; none of which, beside that above mentioned, and perhaps that of Andrea del Sarto in the Salvi convent, equal this in the higher attributes of composition.

Not the least of Giotto's merits are the concise, and vigorous modes by which he incorporates the accessory incidents into the main story. Observe the "Incredulity of St. Thomas" of the above series. The disciple, with doubt beaming in every feature, touches the wound of the Saviour, who gazes on him with sorrowful reproof, while the other apostles are watching with intense expectation the result of the experiment. Another fine stroke of nature is in the boy Christ disputing in the Temple. Mary, who has just entered, with earnest, suppliant gaze and gesture urges her son to come to her arms. One only of the doctors notices the interruption, and turns half angrily towards the pleading mother. His associates are too absorbed by the infant prodigy to be aware of her presence. Jesus, still in the attitude of discussion, points with his right hand towards Mary, with a look that recalls those memorable words "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" How vastly superior in the conception is this unpretending little composition to Holman Hunt's labored and involved picture of the same subject, with its dazzling confusion of details, and lower type of religious idealism! In the "Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth," the latter *kneels* to receive the embrace of her more divinely honored junior. So in the presentation of Christ to the high-priest at the Temple with the cus-



tomary offering of doves, the baby, held by the father, *springs eagerly from his arms towards his mother.*

Giotto's naturalism is of the most refined character. There is nothing whatever in any of his works that savors of the subsequent sensualism of the matured development of the Italian schools. A corresponding purity of sentiment obtains in nearly all of his particular followers. Outlines, figures, and draperies are invariably of the chastest description. Delicacy and propriety in all things are scrupulously observed, under the influence of religious motives. The modesty considered to be appropriate to the Virgin, forbade in most cases the indication of the bosom even; and when, in rare instances, the Madonna was represented as giving suck to the infant Jesus, the drapery carefully concealed every part of her person except that absolutely necessary for the function. There was no effort, as obtained later among the more naturalistic religious artists, to sensualize the beauty of sacred personages. In the purism of art it was sufficient to bestow all its power upon the idealism of sentiment rather than the senses. Hence its intense mysticism, ecstasy, and pious feeling; nothing being permitted which was calculated to distract the mind from its devotional intent. Somewhat of its æsthetic barrenness is attributable to the technical ignorance of the age. But it must also be remembered that much of that ignorance was imposed upon art by the then popular asceticism. Giotto, even while adhering to traditional rule, never went, as many others, into the opposite extreme, and in delineating the bad, did not allow his imagination to revel in hellish types. His devils, seldom introduced, are at the worst but insignificant imps, more allegorical than horrible. Evidently the heaven of his own mind overflowed in all he did. A pleasant personage himself, eschewing dark fancies,

hopeful, elastic, earnest, sympathetic, and observant of the lights of nature, his types partake of a ubiquity of disposition in all that was noble, intellectual, joyous, and truthful.

Tradition declares that the designs of his celebrated allegorical frescoes at Assisi were suggested to him from the spirit-world by his deceased friend Dante.\*

\* By the following extract translated from Boccaccio's *Vita di Dante*, it will be seen that a belief in spiritual intercourse with the unseen world obtained in those times as well as these. Indeed not a little of the art of the Catholic Church at all times has been inspired by her so-called visions, miracles, and other phenomena, which although repudiated, en masse, by Protestants, when out of their sacred record, are strikingly analogous to many well-authenticated marvels which modern spiritualism is pressing home upon the present materialistic age to the enlightenment of many crude and gloomy views of future life. But to Boccaccio's tale :

"A worthy man of Ravenna whose name was Pier Giardino, long time a disciple of Dante, grave in his manner and worthy of credit, relates that after the eighth month from the day of his master's death there came to his house before dawn Jacobo di Dante, who told him that that night while he was asleep his father Dante had appeared to him, clothed in the whitest garments and his face resplendent with an extraordinary light ; that he, Jacobo, asked him if he lived, and that Dante replied 'Yes, but in the true life, not our life.' Then he, Jacobo, asked him if he had completed his work before passing into the true life, and if he had done so what had become of that part of it which was missing, which none of them had been able to find. To this Dante seemed to answer 'Yes, I finished it,' and then took him by the hand and led him into that chamber in which Dante had been accustomed to sleep when he lived in this life, and touching one of the walls, he said 'What you have sought for so much is here,' and at these words both Dante and sleep fled from Jacobo at once. For which reason, Jacobo said he could not rest without coming to explain what he had seen to Pier Giardino, in order that they should go together and search out the place thus pointed out to him, which he had retained excellently in his memory, and to see if this had been pointed out by a true spirit or a false delusion. For which purpose they set off together, and went to the house in which Dante resided at the time of his death. Having called up its present owner he admitted them, and they went to the place thus pointed out ; there they found a blind fixed in the wall, as they had always been used to see it in past days ; they lifted it gently up, when they found a little window in the wall never before seen by any of them, nor did they even know it was there. In it they found several writings, all mouldy from the dampness of the walls, and had they remained there a little while longer they would have mouldered away. Having thoroughly cleared away the mould, they found them to be the thirteen cantos that had been wanting to complete the *Commedia*."

By his portrait of Dante, Giotto may be esteemed the father of modern portraiture, for he gave to that, as to all else he touched, a new existence. The fact of the discovery of the only authentic portrait of the poet, in the chapel of the Bargello at Florence, in 1840, is well known, but the particulars were not generally made public. It is an event of such special interest in the history of art and literature, that we have procured from that accomplished and erudite English artist, Seymour Kirkup, to whom the credit of bringing the portrait to the light of day is due, an exact relation of the manner in which it was brought about.

Another portrait of Dante had been mentioned by Leonardo Aretino,\* as existing in the church of St. Croce, "per dipintore perfetto di quel tempo." It was found upon inquiry that this had been destroyed with nearly all the frescoes on the walls, to make place for the altars erected by Vasari.

Mr. Kirkup then turned his attention to the Bargello, where Vasari, and Filippo Villani before him, had mentioned that there was a portrait of Dante in a fresco by Giotto, which was whitewashed in the sixteenth century. The remainder of the narrative is best given in Mr. Kirkup's own words :

"On my return from the church (St. Croce), a Piedmontese, Sig. Bezzi, called on me, to whom I related my disappointment, and told him there was still a chance left of finding an authentic portrait. I told him of the whitewashed fresco by Giotto, of which *he said he had never heard*. My books were on the table, and I showed him my authorities, Filippo Villani, Vasari, &c., and invited him to join me in seeking for it. He agreed, and the next day called to ask me to let a gentleman join us, whom we both knew, Mr. Wylde, an American, an enthusiastic admirer of Dante and accomplished scholar. We three made an agreement with a restorer recommended by Sig. Scotti of the Gallery. We agreed to pay between us equally to Sig. Marini two hundred and forty scudi for

\* *Le Vita di Dante e del Petruca.* Firenze, 1672.

clearing the whitewash, whether successful or not in finding the portrait. Sig. Bezzi, being an Italian, drew up the necessary petition to the government, and after some difficulty leave was granted, and Marini set to work. The first time I went to the Bargello I found he had made two holes in the wall as big as his head, in which he had placed two beams for his scaffold. If the portrait had been there it would have been lost forever. He was obstinate, and I was obliged to threaten not to pay him if he made another hole. He continued the work with trestles. After some time the government stopped the work. Some fine figures had been found. Perhaps it was feared that we should remove and sell them, or perhaps they were ashamed that foreigners should do what was so national an undertaking. It was dropped for some time, but at last they consented to continue the engagement on the same terms with Marini, and he returned to the Bargello in their pay. During this time Mr. Wylde returned to America and Sig. Bezzi went to England. The work went on, and figures were discovered, and at last I heard that Dante was found. I ran to the place and saw it. 'What a pity,' I said, 'the eye is lost!'—'Era un chiodo,' said Marini. How did he know it? no doubt he drew it out of the white wall instead of cutting it. There was a large and deep hole, and the people who mounted on the scaffold put their fingers in it, 'Oh, c'è una buca!' I pressed Marini to fill it, but it remained for many months. At last, on the occasion of the Scientific Congress, orders were given to restore the fresco. I saw the minister of public works directing Marini how to paint a new eye, and they made it between them too small and too near the nose after having filled the hole. Not content with that they painted the rest of the face to match the new eye, to the injury of its expression and character, and the surface, which was like an enamel, became rough and mealy with his distemper colors. The alterations were not confined to the face. The figure was dressed in the three colors worn by Beatrice, as described in the 'Purgatorio,'

Sovra *candido* vel, cinta d' oliva,  
 Donna m' apparve sotto *verde* manto,  
 Vestita di *color di fiamma viva*.—Canto xxx. 31.

These colors being too radical for that time, 1840, the danger was avoided by changing the green to chocolate-color. The whole painting is so much spoiled that it would be worth while to remove the guache by applying a damp cloth. The cap is changed in form, and the rest daubed in a wretched manner.

"They would not allow me to make a drawing from it, saying 'E una cosa troppo gelosa.' It was ungrateful enough, and I made a little sketch in my hat on a book. I afterwards found means, by bribing a gaoler, to get locked up for one morning, and I took some tracing-paper in my portfolio, but I found it useless. The light was so weak and bad from a side window that I could hardly see a line. Luckily I had taken a piece of talc or talque, and was able to make a correct tracing, and then withdrawing to a distance I made a drawing by my eye, copying the light and shade, and by the help of the two I was able to make a careful drawing of it, which I gave to Lord Vernon. He has lately had it finely engraved for the Arundel Society, and it is the only print that gives a true idea of what the fresco was before it was repainted."

Soon after the portrait was brought to light, Sig. Bezzi went to London, and there, without mentioning either Mr. Kirkup's or Mr. Wylde's participation in the matter, got Walter Savage Landor and Sir Charles Eastlake to write in the periodicals of the time brilliant accounts of *his* discovery.

In none of his works does Giotto appear more to advantage than in this portrait, as it originally existed, in his exquisite conception of the character of his friend. It is very simple in outline; and done with slight apparent labor. But it discloses the "prophetic soul" of Dante, as he must have appeared in his younger and happier days, when, under the daily inspiration of the sight of Beatrice, nature was developing within him the germs of his future greatness. No one can look on that face, so full of intellectual aspiration and ecstatic desire, conscious of internal strength yet tinged with the sweet foreboding of sorrow that ever shadows the joy of deep love—that ever-present something which veils the coveted object while disclosing its beauty—without feeling that Giotto understood Dante then as we may now, in the full light of his accomplished inspiration. The recovering of the lineaments of the outer man infused with the spirit of what was to be, before age and pain had roughened them with sacred sorrow, was precisely what was needed to complete our comprehension of him.

Of Giotto, Dante had written :

"Credette Cimabue nella picture  
Tener le campo ; ed ora la Giotto il grido  
Sicchè la fama di colui oscura."

"Cimabue thought  
To lord it over painting's field ; and now  
The cry is Giotto, and his name eclipsed."

CAREY.

The influence of the poet upon Giotto is perceptible in



his use of refined allegory, which does not seem so natural to himself as in accordance with the prevailing taste. Yet there is no point in his character more striking than his freedom from mental slavery of every kind. His eclectic tastes and hearty sympathies with intellectual greatness, naturally induced in him close relations with a genius so unlike his own in many respects as that of the uncompromising, lofty-minded, though irate, Dante, whose character was the concentration both of the greatness and the bitterness of the party-spirit of his century. The poet ruled the world of mind in solitude and exile. The painter's kingdom, home we should say, was everywhere. All hearts rejoiced in his presence; for he possessed the enviable power of impressing himself upon others without exciting opposition. As man or artist, no one's independence was ever more complete and at the same time more harmonious with circumstances, which always made a fair wind for him. Contemporary jealousy and modern criticism equally acquiesce in his fame, so that his good fortune is as permanent as it was wide-spread. It would be delightful to know more of the private life of one of whom the world has always spoken well. A great man without enemies seems an anomaly in history. But such continuous amiability from men of all degrees and opinions towards him, could not have existed without an electrical current of genuine, well-poised humanity flowing from him at all times, towards all men. He lived, too, in unamiable times, when Guelf and Ghibelline alternately drove each other to exile and ruin. The Bianchi and Neri factions were synonymous with rapine, arson, and assassination. Citizens' homes were lofty, massive towers, turreted and machicolated for defence; a stern necessity of the too frequent social anarchy. Some of these domestic fortifica-



tions, which were extremely numerous, were more than two hundred feet high, rising like lofty trees in a forest, far above the dense masses of houses that clustered around their foundations. Evil betided him, whose foeman was nigh, who neglected "watch and ward." For those were days in which family feuds descended, as a sacred legacy from father to son.

Let us see of what character were the civil shoals through which Giotto steered his bark so prosperously. The prosy old chronicle of Marchione Stefani tells us, that in 1286, "there was in Pistoja a family of more than one hundred men capable of bearing arms; it was of great antiquity, but was wealthy, powerful, and numerous, descended from one Cancellieri Notaro, and from him they had preserved their family name. From the children of the two wives of this man were descended the one hundred and seven men at arms already enumerated; one of the wives having been named Madonna Bianca, her descendants were called Cancellieri Bianchi, and the descendants of the other wife were called Cancellieri Neri. It came to pass through the agency of the enemy of the human race, that one day in their sports, a son of one of the Black Cancellieri, named Lori, wounded a son of one of the White Cancellieri. The father of the former reproved his boy, saying, 'Go to Messa Bertucci and ask him to pardon thee.' The son went, and found him afflicted on account of the accident to his son. When he had heard Lori, he said, 'Thou hast shown little wisdom in coming here, and thy father in sending thee.' Being in a room on the ground-floor, beside one of his stables, where there was a manger, he had him seized and his hand chopped off on the edge of it, and then said to him 'Carry thy hand to thy father who sent thee.'

The youth, thus mutilated, departed, and returned to his father. When his father saw him, as may reasonably be expected, he and his took up arms. Many conflicts ensued, and some died on one side and some on the other; and it divided the city of Pistoja."

Unhappily the Bianchi and Neri quarrel was not confined to the city in which it originated, but spread to Florence, where the contests were if possible fiercer and more sanguinary than at Pistoja. During a hollow reconciliation brought about by the mediation of Pope Boniface VIII. — the Church then was often diligent in her efforts to make peace and repress barbarism — Villani writes "On Christmas day, while Simone Donati, the son of Corso, was *listening to preaching* in the Piazza Sante Croce, his mother's brother, Niccolo di Cerchi, passed by with several companions on horseback, on his way to visit his farm and mill outside the gates. Without any provocation, and wholly off his guard, he was struck down by his nephew and killed." The chronicler observes that "God did show the justice of his judgments," for the said Simone died the following night from a wound he received at the time of the murder, but "he was considered a great loss, for he was the most finished and accomplished young gentleman of Florence."

Rough times and quick tempers, those of the thirteenth century! Not unlike to some of ours in the America of the nineteenth, by the grace of God, free of hand in good, as well as evil. But in old Italy a defeat in an election was equivalent to banishment, confiscation, and something worse, if the victors could catch the conquered. When, in 1302, by the treachery of Charles d'Anjou, the Ghibellines overcame the Guelf magistracy of Florence, Dante was the ambassador of the commonwealth at Rome. His property was immediately plundered, and he, with his po-

litical associates, sentenced "to be burned until they died," should they fall into the hands of their successors in the government of their native city.\* But Dante was fierce too, in his way, in verse; for his enemies are still burning in the fires he prepared for them, and will continue to scorch while poetry is honored. Yet in dealing damnation he is sternly just, respects neither station nor person, and is severe only against sin and its doers. Giotto had no enemies; so he puts no one in hell. Judging from his works and life, he seems to have quite forgotten there was a hell. Dante's temper was not Giotto's. Local tradition asserts that the former was wont even to throw stones at his enemies in his younger days, other weapons failing. Once, walking through the streets of Florence, wearing his gorget and arm-piece, he met an ass-driver, who as he trudged along sung from the poet's book, ever and anon striking his beast and shouting "Arri" to urge him on. In going by, Dante, enraged at his treatment of his verses, struck him a severe blow with his arm-piece on his shoulders, exclaiming to the astonished lout "That 'Arri' was not put in by me."

On another occasion, near the San Piero gate, he overheard a lusty blacksmith singing one of his verses in a hideous manner, with alterations and additions of his own, keeping time to his music with blows upon the anvil. Dante rushed to the shop, seized the big hammer and threw it across the street; then the tongs, and, one after another, the rest of the tools. The smith, in his turn enraged, cried out "What the devil are you about? Are you mad?" "No," says Dante, "but if you do not wish me to spoil your things, do not spoil mine."

\* See Count Caesar Balbo's *Life and Times of Dante*; also for the citations from the old chronicles before quoted, *et seq.* Vol. i. p. 249. London, 1852.

Never fear, Dante, you will have enemies enough ! We, seeing the poet and statesman in the full magnitude of his fame, can not only credit but indorse his speech to the chiefs of his party, assembled to deliberate upon an embassy to the pope to oppose the visit of Charles d'Anjou. He was as right in his opinion of himself as was Giotto in his symbolical circle. Who among his contemporaries could rival Dante ? But contemporaries hearken with less lenient ears to scornful speech than do posterity. "If I go, who remains ? and if I remain, who goes ?" His friends never forgave it.

So much for Giotto's friend ; now for Giotto. He met men and beasts with a different disposition. Yet he could joke, cut and thrust, and neither disturb his own nor his butt's temper. He lived in the Via Cocomero, in a house which belonged to Cimabue, now, alas ! destroyed. One day, being in his gala suit, in company with some friends, going out to a festivity, a filthy hog ran between his legs, and upset him in the mire. "Ah," he exclaimed, as he picked himself up, laughing right heartily, "you are quite right, brute ; I, who have gained so much money by your bristles, have never given you even a dish of soup."

When Dante was in exile at Padua, he was hospitably entertained by Giotto. Seeing his children, who were as ugly as their father, the poet said to him "Renowned master, it astonishes me that you, who have not your equal the world over in painting for making such beautiful faces for others, should make them so ugly for yourself." To which Giotto responded "*Quia pingo de die, sed fingo de nocte.*" Wittily retorted, although we have a similar joke told of the Roman painter Mallius, a thousand years older. Original with him or not, it greatly amused Dante.\*

\* Baldinucci, vol. i. p. 121.

Pig, poet, or prince, to each Giotto was never at loss for repartee. While at work for the King of Naples, the latter often came to him, attracted even more by his conversation than his painting. On one of these royal visits, as the heat was very oppressive, the good-natured Robert proposed that the artist should take some relaxation, saying "Giotto, if I were you I would leave off for a while." "I would do the same if I were you," was his reply. At another time, Robert asked him to paint his kingdom. The artist immediately drew an ass saddled, with another pack-saddle lying at its feet, which the donkey, much enamored with it, was continually smelling of. On each saddle were painted the royal insignia. "What does this signify?" asked the king. "Simply that the ass, your kingdom, not satisfied with one royal saddle, is always snuffing around for another."

The personal ugliness of Giotto was a standing joke among his friends. Both Petrarch and Boccaccio refer to it. But they all warmly loved him, as he deserved to be, for the beauty of his mind and manners, which, like the exalted sentiment he displayed in painting, blinds us to his external and technical defects. His wit was inexhaustible; so was his good-humor. In courtesy and kindness none surpassed him. While charming everybody with the brilliancy of his conversation, and winning all hearts by the goodness of his own, with spontaneous facility of character accommodating himself to every variety of disposition and grade of rank, he always preserved his own native refinement and independence, so that neither hasty speech, dubious act, nor anything unworthy of a generous, highly cultivated nature, is recorded of him. Such, withal, was his modesty that he always refused to use the title of "Magister," or master, in his profession, which had been



early conferred on him. This, too, in an age when such distinctions were coveted, because, besides fame, they conferred solid advantages. Nor, although freely enjoying life, was he without a deep sense of religion. In a picture painted for a church at Gaeta, the Crucifixion, a subject for many centuries oftenest required of art on account of its solemn, mystical meaning, he introduces himself humbly kneeling at the foot of the cross. Of his wife and eight children we can only infer that, with such a husband and father, they formed a happy domestic circle. One of his sons, Francesco, became a painter, but as nothing beside this fact is told of him, he probably, like most sons of great men, did not inherit his parent's genius.

Certain characteristic anecdotes cling to great names like barnacles to a ship's bottom, being repeated and shifted from one to another according to the humor of the moment. Thus the well-known story of a fly being painted so naturally upon the nose of a portrait, by a pupil during the master's absence, as to deceive him on his return, and to provoke him to attempt to brush it off, is carried as far back as Cimabue and Giotto by Vasari, which, if true, would be a bit of naturalism not at all in accordance with the skill of the day. So, too, we have a story of a pair of slippers painted on the floor by a pupil of another of these old painters, which, when the master came in, he vainly attempted to take up, believing them to be his own. In fact, many of the tales now so popularly attributed to artists three centuries nearer our time, were *then* bestowed upon others equally as remote from that period. Whence their original derivation, no antiquary can now decide. But that some go wellnigh back into mythic periods is evident from the disreputable story told by Seneca of Parthasius, who is accused of having crucified a slave that he



might paint from nature the strongest expression of bodily anguish. In time, this fiction was attached to Giotto, as a compliment to the graphic truth of his crucifixes. As a sample of this species of dubious recognition by the vulgar of great qualities in artists, with the absurd traditions their imaginations gradually weave around them, we quote the story in full as applied to him.

“Giotto, intending one day to draw a crucifix, persuaded a poor man to suffer himself to be bound to the cross for an hour, at the end of which he was to be released, and receive a considerable reward for it; but, instead of this, as soon as he had fastened him he stabbed him dead, and then fell to drawing. When he had finished his picture, he carried it to the pope, who liked it so well that he was resolved to place it over the altar of his own chapel. Giotto told him, as he liked the copy so well he would show him the original. ‘What do you mean?’ said the pope; ‘will you show me Jesus Christ on the cross in person?’ ‘No,’ said Giotto, ‘but I will show your holiness the original from whence I drew this, if you will absolve me from all punishment.’ The pope promised this, which Giotto believing, attended him to the place where it was. As soon as they were entered, he drew back a curtain which hung before the dead man on the cross, and told him what he had done. The pope, troubled at so barbarous an action, retracted his promise, and told Giotto that he should surely be put to an exemplary death. Giotto, with seeming resignation, only begged leave to finish the piece before he died, which was granted him, and a guard set to prevent his escape. As soon as the picture was delivered into his hands, he took a brush, and, dipping it in a sort of stuff ready for that purpose, daubed the picture all over with it, so that

nothing of the crucifix could be seen. His holiness was so incensed that he threatened to put Giotto to the most cruel death unless he drew another like the former ; if so, he would not only give him his life, but also an ample reward in money. Giotto, as he had reason, desired this under the pope's signet, that he might not be in danger of a second appeal. This was granted to him ; and, taking a wet sponge, he wiped off all the varnish he had daubed on the picture, so that the crucifix appeared the same in all respects as it did before. Upon this, the pope remitted his punishment ; and they say that this crucifix is the original from which the most famous crucifixes in Europe are drawn." \*

This absurd tale, with trifling variations, became a favorite legend in art. Deserting Giotto, it was attached for a while to Michel Angelo ; subsequently to Guido, since whom, probably no artist has been thought deserving of it, as it has not gone further.

Outside of his plastic and pictorial art we have no sample of the poetical merits of Giotto, except his stanzas upon poverty.† His sentiments in these verses correspond with his genial temperament, and are quite at variance with the popular ascetic doctrines then so sedulously cultivated by the Church. Still he was high in favor with the monastic orders, and much employed by the Franciscans, the severest of all.

Vespignano, a petty hamlet fourteen miles from Florence, was his birthplace. He was born in 1276, his father, Bondone, being a common laborer. His death took place in Florence, in 1336. Besides these dates nothing is known of either event.‡

\* Pilkington's *Dictionary of Painters*, p. 227. London, 1852.

† Lemonier's Vasari, vol. i. p. 348. Florence, 1846.

‡ Emeric David suggests that he was born in 1266, because in 1298 he had al-

Giotto himself was emphatically a man of action. His basis of artistic thought was religion, but he characterizes it under its dramatic rather than its contemplative aspect. The two often mingle in the same individual. Generally, however, we find a marked predilection for one or the other, which in the immediate disciples of Giotto and contemporary masters is so conspicuous as to have led to their division into two great and distinct schools, named from the localities where either distinction predominated, the dramatic being styled the Florentine, and the contemplative the Sienese, with branches and modifications intermingling throughout Italy.

This classification is not perfect. It serves to portray the prevailing local tones, but draws too artificial a line between artists. There are two methods: one of abstract principles, the other of external styles. Similar inspiration often gives birth to diverse expressions, which, taking their tones from idiosyncrasies of thought or feeling, occasion distinct nomenclatures in art, based upon its external manifestations. Fra Angelico, Duccio, Giotto, Giovanni Bellini, and Michel Angelo are exceedingly dissimilar in style, yet the same religious principles and devout feelings were at the foundation of the art of each. Our purpose will be better elucidated by establishing as the groundwork of classification, first, the broad Christian track, which is sufficiently comprehensive to embrace all that is earnest, sincere, and the product of religious faith in all the artists of the period of the Giotteschi and those of their tone of mind, but with

ready executed his mosaic of the "Miraculous Draught of Fishes" at Rome, and many of his great works at Florence, Arezzo, Assisi, and even in the first-named city; the mere amount of labor of which, not to speak of the maturity of genius required, seems too great to attribute to a young man of twenty-two years. The editors of the latest Italian edition of Vasari, however, adhere to the commonly received date.

improved execution derived from the subsequent riper development of naturalism.

Secondly, we shall group the artists, regarding locality and technical manner as of secondary importance, according to the generic modes of expressing their ideas; having first, as a common foundation, defined their ideas and aims. For the present the path is a plain one; religion being the main idea, and instruction and edification the chief aims, which found expression in one or the other of two aspects; the dramatic or contemplative, or better defined, Epic and Lyric.

The Epic aspect includes those whose tendencies were to action and narrative or dramatic expression, and who in consequence looked more directly to external nature for their studies. Objective in thought and feeling, their art was naturalistic, taking its inspiration and lessons from the world about them, seldom aspiring to go beyond the visible range of humanity; or, when aspiring to the supernatural and the sublime, adhering in their creations to those forms and actions most suggestive of the unseen *forces* of life, present or future. Their sympathies were in the direction of active power; their delight in aroused vital energies; and their language that of the tangible world of events and things. Facts were their main reliance—the probable, actual, and historical being their groundwork, even when imagination was in its highest creative flight. With them idealization is never transcendental; mysticism and repose are not to their liking. Hence Epic art is more pleasing and intelligible. Hence, also, when it deals in spiritualities, its types are earthly.

The other class, if reference was had only to their habit of thought, it would be well to term idealists; for their idiosyncrasy is to express themselves interiorly through their

subjects, incarnating in them ideas and emotions which have their source in their own contemplative faculties rather than in the world about them. Spiritual idealization is their aim, repose their chief characteristic, and contemplation their ruling habit. They strive to interpret the soul, to penetrate its ultimate purposes and meanings, to spiritualize their topics. Beatitude, peace, ecstasy, rejoice their hearts. They deal in symbols, allegory, and mysticism. A poetical halo is around their works. The quiet virtues inspire them. Shrinking from violent action, they prefer ideas to facts. Hence they are rarely historical, and if they seek to illustrate an event, it is rather from their *feeling* that it takes shape, than from the probabilities and possibilities of the actual. They look to nature for the language of expression, for this is the common necessity of art; but their ecstatic thought so overpowers the external mechanism, that in viewing their works, much technical deficiency is unnoticed or forgiven in the fulness of idea and beauty of sentiment; while with the Epic artists, the imitative quality is so prominent that it challenges comparison with its models. In fine, the two styles are the inversions of each other in spirit: one by external truth leading the perceptions into the inner sense of things, often, however, arresting itself and the spectator on the threshold of the soul, or, worse, degenerating into materialism, from exaggeration of its tendencies to *copy* and fondness for portraiture; the other, if excessive, vague, insipid, and rude, yet in its superior estate lovely and captivating, speaking to us as by disembodied spirits, effulgent with unutterable joys.\*

\* Pl. B, fig. 6, is a favorable specimen of mystic art. The subject is the "Assumption of the Virgin." It is of the school of Siena and akin to the works of the Lorinzetti. The rapt devotion and happiness that surpasseth speech of the Madonna are beautifully rendered, and in the picture itself the tones of color are as clear and bright as crystal, suggesting an atmosphere of beatitude.



We must not be seduced into an inordinate fondness for either form. Perfect art demands the harmonious union of the attributes of each. Spiritual truth and beauty need to be wedded to beauty and truth of external shape. But with the exception of a few great names, artists of the period in question have rarely given us well-balanced art. This will not surprise us, when we reflect how seldom these diverging principles of humanity, the practical and ideal, are harmoniously tempered in one individual.

In religious art, the Epic style may be termed its speech; the Lyric, its song. This distinction, like all generalities, is far from perfect. Its difficulty is enhanced by the comprehensive genius of many artists, who, in the unfoldings of their varied faculties, disclosed themselves with almost equal facility in either style. Still, in general the discrimination will hold good, and in making use of it, we shall be guided by the prevalent tone of composition of each artist, content to approximate to correctness, where it is impossible to be infallible in judgment.

Taking Giotto, therefore, for the representation and starting-point of the new-born Progress, we design to trace his influence through a brilliant succession of disciples, who adopted his style, improving in details or varying somewhat in mental character, but never differing sufficiently as a whole or so surpassing him in invention or genius as to form a new school of progress, until Masaccio and his followers extinguished gold backgrounds, and gave the final victory over mysticism and purism to absolute naturalism, creating art as it were anew, upon the basis of science, with entire freedom of choice, though religious motives still held powerful sway for some time longer.



## CHAPTER VI.

The Epic successors of Giotto. Pietro Cavallini of Rome, 1259–1344. Buffal-macco, the Buffoon, fld. 1300. His Works and Jokes. Stefano, 1305–1350, the Premature. Giotto, 1324–1368, the Martyr. Puccio Capanna, the oldest scholar of Giotto. Angelo Gaddi, 1324–1390, the Merchant-painter. Antonio Veneziano, Giovanni da Milano, and Francesco da Volterra. Niccola di Pietro, 1390. Bruno, 1350. Gherardo Starnina, 1354–1408. Cennino Cennini, fld. 1400, the Author and Enthusiast. His Maxims, Piety, and Poverty. The Bicci family. Decadence of Giottesque style into Manufacture. The Giot-teschi of Padua and Bologna. Andrea Orgagna, 1329–1376, the Archangel. Bernardo, his Brother. The Spirit of Fear and Revenge in Politics and Art of the Mediævalists. The Pride and Ambition of the Florentines — their diabolical Amusements. Their Artistic Hell—its Origin—how Peopled. Low side of Orgagna's Art. His Imaginative Power. Spinello Aretino, 1308–1400, the Good. Frightened to death by a Vision. His noble Character. Parri, his Son. “The Lot of the False Tongue.”

OF the immediate succession to Giotto, the artists in whom the Epic feeling predominated will first engage our attention. It will be necessary to notice those only who are particularly eminent ; for were we merely to name all of the common herd who found employment and some degree of local consideration in this prolific period of art, it would cumber this work, without benefit in return, even to the most prolix inquirer. Their works partake of the character of manufacture, at the best never surpass mediocrity, and were created to supply the most ordinary demands of devotion and at the cheapest rates. There were registered in Florence alone, in 1300, more than one hundred painters of this character. Each hamlet and petty town had its liberal supply. Ever since, Tuscany has kept up her quantity, though not her quality, of artists, so that she still

affords an inexhaustible quarry of pictures, ancient and modern, of the decorative or worthless class, while of the souvenirs of her sons of genius there remains but scant supply for the stranger to glean. Among such, however, and in her galleries, we find examples of great merit, whose pedigree is wholly lost, but whose claims to consideration are second only to those of the best-known masters; and however much enjoyment we may receive from a work of art intrinsically, there is always a certain disappointment in not being able to identify it with its author.

An attractive example of anonymous painting of the earliest period after Giotto is to be seen in the Academy of Florence, No. 14, an altar-piece of virgin purity, representing the Vision of St. Bernard. It is divided into three parts, with a "gradino," containing six scenes from the lives of the saints figured in the upper portion, and above the whole, the usual composition of the Annunciation. Formerly this picture was attributed to Giotto, but it has scarcely anything in common with him. Lord Lindsay suggests for it Antonio Veneziano, though on no satisfactory grounds. It is, however, worthy of either master. St. Bernard kneels at his desk in the garden of the monastery, with his pen in hand. Looking up, he beholds the Virgin, attended by angels, floating in the air and coming towards him. A glorious vision! Immaculate purity, ethereal grace, and spiritual significance have seldom been more chastely and beautifully harmonized in colors and outline than in this group, charming beyond words to express, and bathed in celestial light and love. The Virgin is distinguished even among the host of heaven by her superior dignity and beauty. Purity and strength of tints are made to correspond to the holiness of the subject. Although in broad daylight, we perceive the sun's rays are dim in con-

trast with the intense effulgence which emanates from the visitors from Paradise. With the purism of Fra Angelico, the central portion of this picture combines the breadth and grandeur of Orgagna.

Senior in age to Giotto was Pietro Cavallini, of Rome, (1259-1344,) at first a respectable mosaicist of the degenerated Italico-Byzantine type, but subsequently an assistant to Giotto, from whom he imbibed so much of the spirit of progress as to win for himself a distinguished name for noble composition and masterly execution. Little of his work remains beside the injured fresco of the Crucifixion in the Lower Church of St. Francis at Assisi, painted for Walter, Duke of Athens. From its having elicited the praise of Michel Angelo, we perceive what qualities were most conspicuous in it, in its prime. Cavallini's imagination was of a lofty, mystic cast; the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Word being his chief inspiration, and the Annunciation his favorite theme. His faith overflowed in his works. He was fervent in religious duties, and charitable to the poor, to a degree that gained for him, while living, the reputation of a saint, and after his death several of his pictures underwent in popular estimation a sort of canonization, and were accounted miraculous. Beloved and respected by every class, the pious painter survived to his eighty-fifth year, and his mortal remains were laid under the shadows of the frescoes and mosaics with which he had so feelingly adorned the Roman basilica of St. Paul. The easel pictures attributed to him have the breadth and sweep of fresco painting, and evince a predilection for large work, founded upon deep sentiment.

In striking contrast of character to him, though no less remarkable as an artist, was Buonamico di Cristofano, commonly remembered as Buffalmacco; either epithet well

characterizing him, for he was both "a good fellow" and a "buffoon or wit," everybody's boon companion and friend, and no one's enemy but his own. In some respects he was a rival to Giotto. But great as were his talents as an artist, his fame is more widely known by his facetiousness, which Sacchetti has preserved in his merry tales.

He was born at Florence towards the latter part of the thirteenth century, and we hear of him as alive in 1351. He established his reputation as an artist contemporaneously with Giotto, but was altogether of too independent a disposition, with too marked individuality of style, ever to have been one of his pupils. In general, he adhered to Byzantine motives, vitalizing them by a spirit as daringly eccentric and humorous as it was foreign to the tone of mind of the age. He stands by himself among the early religious masters, not impious, heretical, or sensual, but so alive to the ludicrous, and so bizarre in his tastes, that often these qualities got the better of the solemn proprieties of his subjects; and he left examples in his art of low, familiar, or incongruous accessories, such as in a later and less devout age were introduced anew into the compositions of many artists, especially the great Venetians, Tintoretto and Paul Veronese. But we can forgive his making St. Luke with swollen cheeks in the undignified act of blowing the ink from his pen, an old man blowing his nose at the foot of the cross, mothers biting and scratching in their rage during the Massacre of the Innocents, and like innovations complained of by old writers, in consideration of the original thought and natural sympathies he often displayed. His works are bold, full of varied action, figures long, thin, and graceful, with round, full faces, like the better Byzantine, and so intensely expressive as often to border on caricature. Although Buffalmacco was capa-

ble of feeling the force of sacred motives, yet his superabundant humor would force itself into his paintings despite his better judgment, and display itself in quaint caprices, reminding one of the naïve, homely naturalism and eccentricities of the Teutonic schools.

In his "History of Adam," in the Campo Santo at Pisa, the Almighty having created the father of mankind, takes him by the hand and points to the forbidden fruit. Adam has donned the fig-leaf in *anticipation* of his discovery of his nakedness. In another portion, we perceive Eve naked, whom the Creator drags out of Adam's side, he sleeping soundly the while, on a bed of flowers *beside a Roman fountain*, in which birds are drinking and sporting. Finally, having sinned, Adam delves, clad in sheepskins tied about him with grape-vines, a serpent near by coiling for a spring at his bare legs, while Eve, also in a sheepskin toilet, sitting near by with Cain on her lap, has just put down her distaff to caress her babe. He thus tells the origin of industry and domestic life, with happy symbolism, graphic exactness, and pathetic simplicity.

Buffalmacco's vitality of expression is very striking in the group of women curiously watching the building of Noah's ark, one of the same series of compositions attributed to him. The workmen are too intently engaged to notice their visitors. The way they lean upon the timbers, clinging to and peering into the skeleton frame of the monster vessel, with the question "What can these fools be about" legible on their jeering countenances, is wonderfully fine. Indeed for earnestness, grouping, and naïveté, this composition is superior to Raphael's of the same scene. Near it is Buffalmacco's celebrated "Crucifixion," which embodies his merits and demerits. It is cut up into isolated groups, and disfigured by exaggerated action, the grief of



the women bordering on caricature. But the gestures and looks of despair, with which the good angel resigns the soul of the impenitent thief to the vile demons who are already fighting over their prey, are very touching. The glad expression of the angel receiving the penitent thief is also masterly. Both their souls are represented as new-born infants. Individual heads are fine, but throughout the picture there is too much wildness and confusion. His facility of invention was extraordinary, but time has preserved only a few specimens of his work. This loss is partly due to himself, for beside being inclined to the hasty and superficial, as all such vivid geniuses are, trusting more to sudden inspiration than to diligent study, he often prepared his colors so carelessly that his pictures quickly fell to pieces, while, on all occasions, he preferred a joke to success in art.

His master, Andrea Tafi, had the habit of rising long before daybreak to paint, requiring Buffalmacco to do likewise. This was quite foreign to his taste, so he cast about him for some device to put an end to it. Catching thirty large beetles, he contrived to attach to their backs as many little candles. Just before the hour Tafi was accustomed to call him, he lighted them, and let the beetles loose in his master's chamber. No sooner did Tafi see the numerous lights on such ugly-looking creatures, magnified by the dark and his fears, than he began to tremble, "like an old goose as he was," repeat his prayers, and to call upon God to protect him, putting his head under the bedclothes, where, too frightened to call his pupil, he remained breathless the rest of the night. In the morning he asked Buffalmacco if, like him, he had seen a thousand devils crawling about the room? "No," replied the trickster, "I slept soundly all night, and upon waking wondered greatly you had not called me up to work as usual."



“What, to work!” exclaimed the still quaking Tafi, “I have other thoughts in my head than work. I am determined to find another house.”

The next night Buffalmacco put three only of his insect conspirators into the room. Poor Tafi, with the vision of the preceding night still vivid in his memory, seeing other demons come, could not sleep a wink, and as soon as it was daybreak left the house, vowing never to return to it again. His pupil sent the priest of his parish to console and persuade him to come back. Afterwards in talking over the extraordinary phenomena with Tafi, he explained it to him as follows: “I have heard it said that the greatest enemies of God are the devils; consequently they are great enemies of the painters, because we make them as ugly as possible, and out of spite to them, and holy saints as beautiful as can be. In consequence, the demons having more power by night than by day come to torment us. Worse things will happen if we do not put an end entirely to this habit of early watching.” Not only was Tafi cured of his nocturnal industry, but, the story getting abroad, for a long while none others dared to work by night.

Buffalmacco was employed by Bishop Guido of Arezzo to paint a chapel. The bishop had a pet ape, which always watched the artist closely while at work, especially in mixing colors. One Monday morning, on returning to the chapel, Buffalmacco saw that his work had been daubed over in the strangest manner, and utterly ruined. Supposing it to be the envious mischief of some rival, who wished to prejudice him with his patron, he restored his picture, and, complaining to the bishop, obtained a guard of soldiers to watch for any other attempt, with orders to execute summary justice upon the offender. Buffalmacco also put himself in ambush. He had not been long con-

ceased before the ape made his appearance, mounted the scaffold, took up his palette and brushes, mixed his colors together in his own fashion, and fell to work vigorously, repainting his saints. The artist, delighted with his discovery, as soon as his violent laughter would permit, went straight to the bishop, saying, "Monsignore, you wish that I should paint after one method; but your ape desires another. There was no need for you to send to a foreign city for a master, seeing that you have one already in the house who knows his business so well; so, with your permission, I will go back to Florence."

On another occasion, having painted a Madonna with the infant Christ in her arms, for a peasant, who essayed to pay him with promises in lieu of cash, Buffalmacco with water-colors changed the Christ into a sack of gold. No sooner did the countryman discover the transmutation than he hastened in pious horror to the wag of the brush, and besought him to take away the money-bag and replace the Saviour, and he would pay him at once. This being done, a wet sponge in a moment restored the picture to its primitive condition. Upon a similar provocation from some one else, he is charged with having painted a young bear, instead of the baby Jesus, in the arms of his immaculate mother. From which anecdotes it would seem that liberties might be taken with sacred subjects with impunity in the face of the pope, which, if they had occurred in Spain when art was rife, would have consigned their author to the fagots of the Inquisition.

Some nuns commissioned from him an historical painting, which, when finished, pleased them greatly, except that they thought the faces were wan and colorless. Buffalmacco, knowing that the lady abbess had a store of Vermuccia, a delicate wine reserved for the nuns, told them he

could remedy the defect only by mixing his colors with it; then the cheeks would become rosy enough. The simple sisters gladly gave him a liberal supply of their very best for this purpose, which had the effect to make one countenance, at least, of a ruby tone. One day an inquisitive nun surprised him drinking it. She called out to the others "See, now, he is taking it himself;" but the sharp-witted artist immediately ejected it from his mouth upon the picture, which made the act seem all right and proper to them.

The citizens of Perugia had ordered of him a St. Ercolano, their protector, to be painted in the market-place. During the work, they vexed him excessively by their impatient curiosity. To revenge himself, he had a scaffolding built so as to hide the picture, and, having finished it in private, he replaced the golden diadem of the saint by a coronet of gudgeons, paid his bill at the inn, and quietly left for Florence. The Perugians, soon missing him, and discovering the affront, sent off horsemen in pursuit, with orders to kill him. But as he had already crossed their frontiers, he jeered them for their pains, and left them to go home and put up with the indignity to their saint as they best might.

Thus he went on, playing foolish pranks, and joking his honors and genius away, to the amusement of his neighbors, but sadly to his own loss in all that makes a man truly wise and provident. At seventy-eight years old or upwards, the inveterate trickster and spendthrift, his merry race run, found himself a penniless, dying wretch, broken down with bodily infirmities, owing to public charity the bed upon which he died, and the rude coffin into which his remains were hurriedly put, to be as carelessly tumbled into the common grave of the friendless poor. A pitiful

ending of great gifts, which, if better regulated, might have secured to him equal esteem and a like honorable sepulchre with Pietro Cavallini. This manner of life was, however, rare among the old masters. He left one pupil, Giovanni dal Ponte (1307-1365), whom he initiated so fully into his ways that he speedily ran through a good fortune, without, however, like his master, leaving anything behind him to counterbalance his folly.

The mantle of Giotto's genius, passing over his direct progeny, descended upon his nephew, Stefano (1305-1350), who, if we may credit Ghiberti and Vasari, rare judges either, displayed not only all the qualities which made his uncle great, but added to them those elements of naturalism, which, two generations later, were so admirably developed by Masaccio. He seems to have anticipated by nearly a century the tendency of art in this direction, for he improved it so much in its then defective points of perspective, foreshortening, and anatomy, closely following the actual in all his details, that his contemporaries, partly in admiration and perhaps as much in derision of his technical innovations, nicknamed him "the monkey of nature." This, in its worst sense, would intimate that he aimed at minute finish, and loved the subordinate decorations and imitations that belong more particularly to German taste. But in the then comparatively rude condition of design, any sudden improvement, varying from the prevailing style and sentiment, would have caused both discussion and astonishment. He loved the familiar truths of home-life. In making his holy personages less sacredly ideal, he brought them nearer to the natural affections; and, like many of Raphael's, his Madonnas were more maternal than divine. One he represents sewing; a domestic motive which then found no imitators. His talents

were not limited simply to the introduction of pleasing motives and successful imitation. He was even more remarkable, so those say who saw his works, for copiousness of invention, sweetness, grace, and spirituality, surpassing in these qualities all his contemporaries. Nothing, however, remains of his pencil, except a fragment of a painting attributed to him in the Campo Santo at Pisa, a half-figure of St. Thomas d'Aquinas, and the ruined repainted "Crucifixion" in the cloisters of Sta. Maria Novella at Florence. The landscape of the last indicates a breadth and naturalness quite foreign to the art of his epoch. But it is now impossible to tell how much of this character it owes to the repainting of later times. Evidently, the world of art was not prepared for Stefano; or else so much genius could not have made so transient an impression. In the natural course of things, Stefano seems to have been the one to carry forward the Progress begun by Giotto, taking it up where he left it, and adding those qualities which should have ripened next in progressive order of development. Notwithstanding the enthusiasm with which they were welcomed, they disappeared for a while with him. It is likely, however, that genuine appreciation did not occur until the sympathetic\* Ghiberti (1378-1455) saw and made known his peculiar merit, of which, down to Vasari's time, there remained sufficient evidence to elicit from him confirmatory praise, and the special declaration that Stefano "*disegno molto meglio che Giotto.*"

The failure of Stefano to endow painting with his richer gifts and his sensitive feeling for nature, was undoubtedly owing to the fervor of the religious mind, and the influ-

\* He writes "*L'opere di costui sono molto mirabile; fatti con grandissima dottrina.*" — Lemonier's Vasari, vol. i. p. xix.



ence which it still exercised over art. Giotto had, indeed, imbued it with fresh life. But his power, as we have seen, was chiefly dramatic, and more in suggestion of nobler forms than in their technical perfection of design. He had quickened painting with new motives, deeper thought, and more earnest, carefully studied execution. Its range was concentrated on comparatively few topics, with a corresponding intensity and purity of sentiment. The idea to be conveyed was always uppermost in the master's mind. Hence the energies of art were directed to that point. And this is the right beginning and highest aim of art. In this age, we cannot too positively impress this upon the artistic mind. When we perceive spirit overmastering sense, art demands and receives from every rightly instructed mind a large measure of forgiveness for technical mistakes and manual deficiencies. It is, indeed, a great triumph for an artist if he can, through feeling, so absorb attention that the perceptive faculties take faint heed of defects of execution. The best art can never fully satisfy the cravings of spirit. There is always an horizon of undefinable superiority and deeper meaning beyond. Hence its power of repose must rest mainly on its perfect suggestion — the evidence it gives our senses of things unseen. Still our satisfaction is increased if we find that, in addition, science has extorted from nature her cunning of design, seduction of color, and truth of details, harmonizing them into an eloquent, sympathetic whole. Evidently, this was the ambition of Stefano. But popular taste and professional knowledge not being ripe for the improvements he pointed out, progress in this direction was stayed for half a century longer. Therefore, in passing judgment upon the current art of the Giotteschi, we need not expect of it an excellence in naturalism which it nowise sought or

claimed, and of which the example of Stefano produced no immediate fruit.

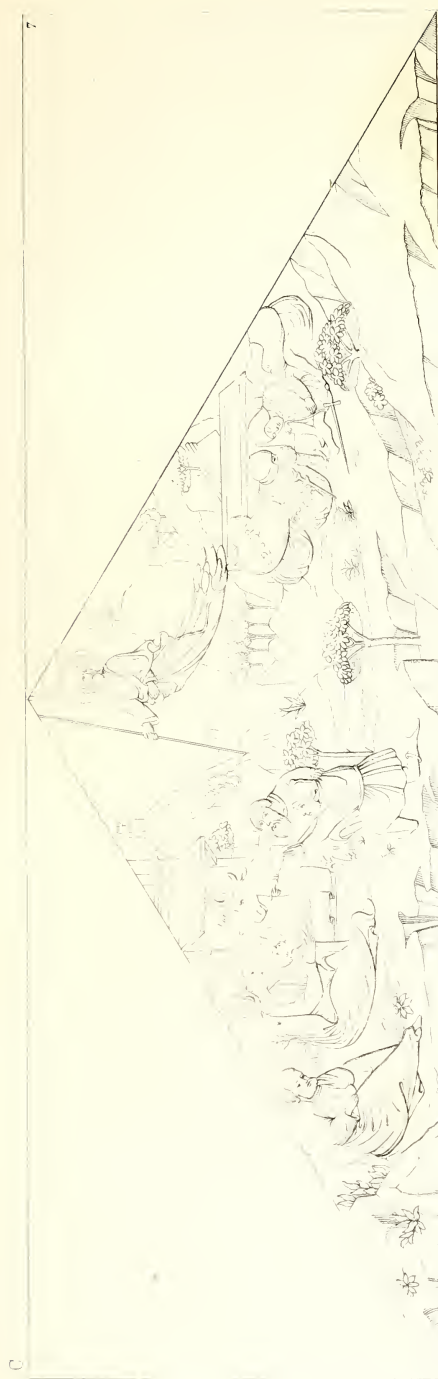
If further confirmation be needed of the premature appearance of Stefano in the world of painting, we find it in the life of his son Tommaso (1324-1368), otherwise known as Giotto. His works are rare in number and in merit; thoroughly Giottesque in sentiment, with greater force of coloring and superior delicacy of design, the natural result of practice and experience in the same direction. Beside the exquisite finish of some of the ornamental details, there is nothing to recall what the critics especially praised in the style of his father, while in all other respects there is so close a resemblance to Giotto as to begot for him, in the popular opinion, the touching fancy that the soul of his great predecessor had reappeared on earth in his form. Hence his name, Giotto, or little Giotto.

But his disposition was as unlike to Giotto's as his genius was similar. He was a solitary and melancholy man; making art a passion; knowing no life outside of it; indifferent to ease and money; always poor, neglectful of self; a great soul, pining for appreciation and striving for excellence; avid of fame, yet morbidly sensitive to the contact of the world. Dying early of consumption, he wins our sympathies both by the sadness of his days and the beauty of his paintings. How many similar souls have been crushed out of earth from lack of physical stamina to contend with its ills, or from a solitariness of life, combined with utter unselfishness and enthusiastic devotion to some noble pursuit, which finally consumed the hearts that fed it! Thus it happened to Giotto. Alas for ourselves!

The best remaining frescoes of his are the unique tomb



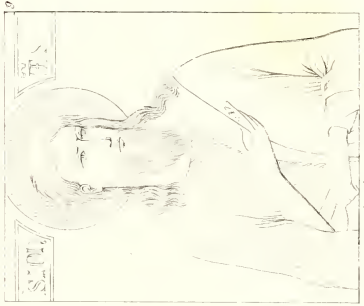




Orfèvre 1224 1204



Bismarck 1224 1204



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of Ubertino di Bardi and the "Life of St. Silvester" in the Bardi chapel of Santa Croce at Florence. The conception of the former is noble and hauntingly impressive. Giotto represents the warrior rising from out of a richly sculptured marble sarcophagus. With hands clasped in prayer, and face uplifted in joyful hope, his person visible to his waist, he has just awakened to the sound of the judgment trumpets blown by two angels, who look expectingly down upon him; while the lofty mountain peaks, so naked and stern, the images of desolation, which form the background of the scene, recall the memories of those who, in fear and anguish, emerging from their unhallowed graves, are about to call upon the rocks to fall upon and hide them from the eye of the Avenging Judge. Christ sits majestically upon the clouds. Not the denunciatory, furious Judge of Michel Angelo, but the sorrowful, compassionate Son of Man, *showing his wounds*, come to close the last act of the Eternal Drama, with an angelic host, bearing about him the instruments of his earthly passion, as a condemnatory spectacle to all guilty souls, and the tokens of salvation to such as are sealed by his blood. It is a Christian monument in the truest sense. The architectural portion is majestic and beautiful; full of appropriate and rich detail, singularly harmonious in its proportions, proving Tommaso's rare skill in sculpture, but, above all, his daring, original, and graphic thought, and just conception of "I am the resurrection and the life." Indeed, in simplicity and effectiveness it attains the sublime.

Giotto was able to combine in a small space, and with but few means, a wonderful fulness of meaning, as we perceive in his little easel-picture of the "Nativity and Resurrection" (pl. C, fig. 7) merged into one scene; the birth and triumph of Christianity; the rising Saviour proclaim-

ing the gift of immortal life to those who believe in his divine origin and mission.

The pupil longest with Giotto, dying an old man in 1348, was Puccio Capanna, of Assisi. He had not sufficient talent to rise to any originality of thought or style, although he repeated Giotto with considerable feeling. His execution was somewhat mannered. The convent of St. Francis at Pistoja contains his best frescoes.

Of more importance is Angelo Gaddi (1324–1390), son of the more distinguished Taddeo. Partaking of the hereditary talent of his family, his tendency was to the dramatic, but he was capricious in work, very unequal, doing credit to his name when he saw fit, and, quite as often, feeble and careless. Though with the power of an artist, he was not one at heart. For he preferred commerce, by which he vastly increased the wealth of his family, which had already become renowned in Florence for its fine gallery of antique sculpture, medals, pictures, and valuable library. Its members were cultivated aristocrats; collecting, patronizing, or practising art, as the whim prompted. His brother, Giovanni, was also a painter. Angelo was pale in color, confused in composition, the result of haste more than weakness, yet animated, not destitute of grace, and, in general, forcible in expression. One wearies over his large compositions, like those of the “History of the Cross” in the choir of Santa Croce at Florence, from their want of repose and unity. His most pleasing work, with more warmth of color than usual, is in the Chapel of the Virgin in the Prato cathedral; a romance in fresco of the adventures of the girdle of the Madonna after it came into the possession of Michele, a youth of Prato who visited Palestine in 1096, until its final deposit in the Duomo.

Antonio Veneziano and Giovanni of Milan, who flourished about the middle of the fourteenth century, introduced Giotto's manner into their native cities, though the former, finding Venice uncongenial, returned to Florence, where he was warmly welcomed by his old friends, and ever continued to be highly esteemed. He was a scholar of Angelo Gaddi, having originally come from Venice expressly to place himself under his instruction; a connection brought about, probably, by Angelo's commercial relations with that city. His frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa are remarkable for their richness and naturalness, while those of Giovanni at Assisi are distinguished for simplicity of composition, warm, delicate coloring, and general gracefulness. Both artists are branches of the great Giottesque tree, true to its sap; not, even by grafting on other trunks, changing its instinctive qualities. Antonio, however, in his story of the "Miracles of San Ranieri," emancipates himself more completely from mysticism than any other of the great successors of Giotto, except Stefano. But his naturalism is less apparent in style than motive. Giovanni cleaves more to the mystic character of his school, while Antonio, in the above-mentioned compositions, displays for the time a rare predilection for the homely, united to a regard for historical proprieties. Indeed, in his better qualities, attempts at rendering the realism of art and truthful conceptions of character as it shapes itself in daily experience, correct and picturesque story-telling, he suggests Masaccio, though with less refinement, more action and humor, and a decided liking for the introduction of ordinary incidents and vulgar commonplaces, by way of contrast, and to add life and variety to the scene. In the fresco above quoted, witness the man so intent on fishing, evidently just feeling a bite, that he

sees nothing of the devil in the shape of a monster cat sitting on the wine-cask of the innkeeper near by. Boniface, a portly pattern of his scaly tribe, has indignantly denied the charge of mixing water with his wine, made by St. Ranieri. Surrounded by his customers, he looks on with hypocritical astonishment, in which the cat-devil maliciously joins, while the saint, holding out his robe, bids him empty into it a bottle of his fraudulent liquor. The garment operates as a miraculous sieve, letting the water fall through on to the ground, but retaining the very small proportion of pure wine contained in the flask. The saint then exhorts him to abandon his dishonest practices, and calls his attention to the devil watching for his soul. In another part of the picture we see a lazy fellow stretched out on the ground, and sleeping soundly. Throughout his compositions there is an admirable diversity of action and character, proving Antonio to have been a close observer of human nature.

Francesco da Volterra's frescoes of the "History of Job" in the Campo Santo at Pisa, begun A. D. 1371, were attributed to Giotto, until Dr. Ernst Förster, by the aid of public documents, detected the error. They are done in the spirit of that master, with a decided feeling for landscape. Francesco's compositions are grand, copious, and graphic. He is specially successful in his treatment of the powers of the unseen world; the hosts of heaven and hell, which he beautifully, forcibly, or terrifically conceives, according to the attributes appropriate to the varied powers of each. His Almighty is dignified and grand, suggested more than defined, the extremities and outlines being merged as it were into the surrounding canopy of clouds. But the ruined condition of his paintings, and their injudicious restorations, leave the spectator but indifferent opportunity to enjoy his cultivated mind.

Nicola di Pietro, a Florentine, painted also at Pisa, in 1390, and left frescoes in Sta. Cróce. He, too, was thoroughly Giottesque, with much dignity and solemnity in his best work.

Bruno, a friend of Buffalmacco, is another of the distinguished series of artists who were called upon to illustrate the Campo Santo at Pisa. His risen Saviour, triumphantly floating in the air with attendant angels, is nobly conceived. Also the group of disciples gazing upon him, realizing fully for the first time, as the angels around them, now visible to their eyes, eagerly point up to their common Lord, the glorious mystery of immortal life.

Among the pupils of Antonio Veneziano we find Gherardo Starnina (1354-1408), who in early life was of so quarrelsome a disposition that he was obliged to leave Florence. He found refuge, patronage, and improved manners among the stately and dignified Castilians. So urbane did he become that on his return to his native city his old enemies warmly welcomed him, and gladly numbered themselves among his friends. Very little has reached us of his work. Enough, however, to show that to a high degree of finish, delicate, and harmonious coloring, he added a refined and spiritual conception of character, in some respects foreshadowing Fra Angelico.

Of far less artistic talent, but from his sincerity, purity, and misfortunes more interesting in his life, is his fellow-townsmen, Cennino Cennini, who died in 1437. He was a pupil of Angelo Gaddi and his inferior in style, exaggerating his faults almost to caricature, but not without a certain merit. Earnest and painstaking, he always did his best, showing that nature and not will was in fault in his not becoming a great artist. Thorough, conscientious, and elevated in his aims, Cennini deserves sympathy and respect. Nor is



his painting destitute of merit, notwithstanding the heaviness and stiffness of many of his figures, particularly the infant Jesus, in the easel pictures attributed to him, and which in these respects recall earlier and more ignorant times. In a side chapel of the church of St. Francesco at Volterra there is an elaborate fresco of the "Massacre of the Innocents," put down by M. Valery to one Cenni di La Cenni, otherwise unknown, but which from its very faults would seem to belong to Cennini.

Cennini is better known by his "Treatise upon Painting," numerous editions of which have been published from time to time in various European languages, one as recently as 1858 at Paris. It is a record of the mechanism of the Giotteschi; Giotto and the Gaddis being the special objects of his veneration. He lavishly infuses into it the axioms, suggestions, and reflections which descended to him by tradition and example, and which were consonant with his own high-minded, single-hearted, scrupulous nature. His little work is particularly valuable as showing the moral and physical discipline which the pious thought of the age considered indispensable to the proper development of the Christian artist, and the high regard entertained for his calling, especially in contrast with the less decorous habits and looser principles of a later epoch.

He draws a forcible distinction between those who are attracted to art by affinity of soul and those who take to it only from a sordid desire of gain. He counsels the former to secure instruction from the best living artists, faithfully studying their methods, and benefiting from their experience. Thirteen years he allots to preliminary studies: one, to elementary drawing; six, to acquire the mechanism of art, which in those days of gold backgrounds, grinding and mixing of colors by the artist himself, preparation of glues,

and various methods "à tempera" or "fresco," was no sinecure labor; and the remaining six to the practice of composition.\* Cennini, like Leonardo, considered that a thorough preparatory discipline and knowledge were requisite for even the foundation for success. Afterwards he advises the pupil, if he possess any original power, to walk entirely by himself, for the better development of his individuality and more complete freedom.

To preserve the senses in due subjection to the spirit, he recommends a light diet, two meals only daily, with a moderate allowance of weak wine. All violent exercises are to be avoided and sensualities of every kind. The hand must be trained to skilful and instinctive obedience to the inspirations of the imagination. Lest thought be disturbed by uncongenial topics, walks are to be solitary, when companionship of the proper kind is not at hand. In fine, self-restraint, industry, love, perseverance, and above all, *obedience* to every law of artistic growth and moral excellence, are the cardinal virtues which the pupil must rely on to carry his probation through to a successful issue. And, moreover, as he was destined to teach holiness, he must be holy himself, leading a blameless life, going regularly to confession, and partaking of communion at least once a year. Indeed these latter tokens of external piety were prescribed by the statutes of the Florentine painters. Cennini concludes with a prayer for grace to sustain the trials of his earthly career, and that his brethren, understanding and profiting by his writings, may live peacefully and prosper on earth, and finally attain to everlasting glory in the life hereafter.

\* Pamphilus of Greece, whose school of painting flourished B. C. 350, required a course of ten years, refusing to receive a pupil for less time, which was devoted to design, arithmetic, geometry, and painting in all its branches.

The regimen which he inculcates was the rule of many a painter during the predominance of the religious feeling in art. Nobility of soul engendered noble art, when disciplined by thorough instruction and stimulated by genius. If, in such instances as that of Cennini, goodness and industry, through lack of creative talent and facility of execution, resulted only in mediocrity, still there is moral strength in his discipline and a refreshing encouragement in his well-ordered life and exalted view of his profession. But the world at large is impatient alike of virtuous maxims and steady application, if not coupled with material progress. Cennini's integrity, humility, weakness of hand, fond lingering over the past, which he idolized, and his pious prosings, brought him scant patronage; for he was cast into prison for debt, and liberated only to be soon after released to another and more genial existence.

But while Cennini fared so badly, there was a family in Florence—grandfather, father, and son—named Bicci, who were fashionable and prosperous, on perhaps but slightly, if any, greater capital of artistic merit, though with the odds of worldly success vastly in their favor, from vain assurance and lack of any reverence for the divinity of art. Lorenzo di Bicci (1350–1427), the grandfather, and his son, Bicci di Lorenzo di Bicci (1373–1452), were the last prominent representatives of the direct Giottesque style in Florence, which with them became so weak and mannered as to lose its claims for longer existence. They imitated, but very superficially, the improvements in design of the school of Masolino, but were hasty, without depth of feeling or the sincerity which characterized their predecessors. It is true that they were popular and their works much in request. But theirs was an epoch when the style they represented, having exhausted itself, had degenerated to barren

mechanism, and was abandoned to the vulgar or those who viewed it solely in the light of ignorant devotion ; while the real patrons of art were absorbed in the new directions given to it by the respective genius and feeling of Fra Angelico and Masaccio. Their names, consequently, deserve mention only as showing the decadence of the lineal style of Giotto, which indeed survived them in but rare and isolated instances ; barren imitations of anterior excellence ; a specimen of which, by one Petrus Franciscus, dated 1494, is still to be seen in an altar-piece in the church of the Augustines at San Gimignano.

The grandson, Neri di Bicci (1419-1486), requires more particular mention. His paintings are very abundant throughout Tuscany, for he was as facile, prolific, and unscrupulous an artist as is Alexander Dumas an author, adapting himself with fatal ease to the requirements of the market, careless of his reputation in comparison with his purse. That he was clever we have evidence in not a few of his works, which afford glimpses of true sentiment and a beauty of execution that had they been conscientiously cultivated, would indubitably have won for him real distinction with posterity. As it is, he is chiefly known from the multitude and variety of his easel productions, their general incorrectness of design, bloated, idiotic heads, especially of angels, crowded, ill-arranged compositions, poverty of invention, frequency of plagiarism, profuse use of gold in draperies, tawdry, mechanical decoration in general, and prevalent coarseness of brush. He did not absolutely daub, but he *fabricated*, for the market, reducing art to manufacture, and no doubt employing the cheapest assistants, to enable him to turn out the greatest amount of profitable work. Otherwise one cannot well account for the utter depravity in style and degradation in

spirit which with him descended upon the noble school of Giotto, and the great contrasts sometimes displayed in hints as it were, of his real capacity and his low standard of general execution. He did not confine himself to gold backgrounds, but borrowed attractions from the naturalistic school, imitating when he saw fit, not unsuccessfully, its superior design, perspective, and the architectural accessories then coming into vogue. Neri's taste, however, was radically bad. His predilections were for glitter and decoration, scenic effect and cheap work. Hence he could never place himself in the ranks of his friend Filippo Lippi, who was then in the ascendant. Gain was his aim. He transformed his studio into a vast manufactory. Not only pictures were produced with astonishing rapidity, but also the carved and gilt paraphernalia of church altars: wooden angels and huge candlesticks. He painted armor, gilded furniture, made designs for tapestry, got up scenery for festivals, signs for shopmen; restored old pictures; colored plaster images; made crucifixes; in fact turned his hand and art to any object that brought him custom, even to exporting his wares largely to foreign countries.\* Of course he became rich and noted, but disgraced his profession; and the sole legacy he has left for the benefit of art is one of warning to those whose low inclinations may prompt them to imitate his example.

Before proceeding to the two great names which terminate the group of the primitive Epic succession of Giotto, although somewhat beyond our prescribed boundaries, we must mention a few artists at Padua and Bologna, who were either contemporary with Giotto, and of the early Italico-Byzantine style, or who subsequently carried forward into those and neighboring cities the principles and methods

\* *Commentario alla Vita di Lorenzo di Bicci*, Vasari, vol. ii. p. 25.



of that great leader. Among them we find at Padua, about 1350, Guariento, who also left throughout Lombardy many works indicative of genius and originality. But the most distinguished artist of this branch of the Giotteschi was a Florentine named Giusto Menabuoi. He flourished as early as 1376, and may be cited as the chief example of brilliant coloring and dramatic effect. Lord Lindsay\* says of his frescoes in St. Giorgio at Padua, "They are singularly dramatic; every variety of character, Governor, Consul, Knight, Noble, Citizen, and Clown, is discriminated with a degree of truth that startles one; they are full of portraits, much more knightly and gentlemanlike than you see in the Florentine frescoes — the principal figures are uniformly characteristic and the noblest in mien and look as well as the most conspicuous in place; feeling, simplicity, and good taste prevail throughout; the design is upon the whole excellent, save that the female forms, as in the naked St. Lucia, are deficient in elegance; the grouping and relief are admirable, — there are crowds of figures but no confusion; the coloring is soft and pleasing; the backgrounds, occasionally of landscape, are usually of the more gorgeous and exquisite Lombard or Pointed Architecture. I think that the author of these frescoes comes very near Masaccio in his peculiar merits; while in Christian feeling, invention, and even in composition, he surpasses him. Unlike many of the Giotteschi, he has a thousand ideas of his own."

Vitale, of Bologna, which city was an important central point in the revival of art, lived in the first half of the fourteenth century, and was surnamed "Dalle Madonna," from his predilection for and success in painting the Virgin. Unlike other mystics, he refused to paint their favorite subject,

\* Vol. ii. p. 347.



Christ on the Cross, saying "that the Jews had already crucified him once too often, while Christians did as much every day by their sins."\*

Another Bolognese, Jacobo d' Avanzo, of the school of Padua, distinguished himself a generation later for his forcible invention, graphic grouping, and rich coloring. He had not the poetical grandeur and fulness of Orgagna and Giotto, but excelled them in picturesque naturalness, and was successful in giving variety and individuality to his figures. In his management of details and accessories he appears to have been, like Stefano, in advance of the Giotteschi in general, and was equally unsuccessful in transmitting his progress to his pupils. We see in his aërial perspective and architecture and more careful drawing much to admire for his age. Had his location been Tuscany, he would have ranked with the best of that school.

To fully elucidate the origin and progress of the several branches of the Giottesque Painting in central and northern Italy, with the names of the principal artists, would require a separate volume; and as in motive it corresponds with the main stream in Tuscany, differing chiefly in details of color and those instinctive qualities which are in great part the growth of local influences, not presenting any great originating minds to take the lead of those Tuscans whose names are most familiar in history, we shall now return to that rich soil, leaving our readers, if curiosity tempt, to pursue their inquiries from the paintings and those authentic materials which Italian research has brought to light in every part of that favored land.

Andrea Orgagna (1329-1376), of Florence, stands out prominently as a great, original, independent genius; a complete artist and noble man. His paternal name was

\* Lord Lindsay, vol. iii. p. 205.

Cione, and he was one of five brothers, all artists: Bernardo, the eldest, remarkable for his bold design, fine finish, and beautiful type of heads, being his partner, friend, and pupil, cheerfully and lovingly assenting to the supremacy nature had bestowed upon Andrea, whose artistic character is aptly expressed in the word Orgagna, a corruption of Arcagnuolo, the Archangel, bestowed by contemporaries and confirmed by posterity.

Architect, sculptor, and painter, Orgagna is almost as well known as Giotto, and for good cause. He was also a lover of Dante, and a maker of sonnets pronounced clever by contemporary judges. Orgagna's influence was not equal to Giotto's, chiefly because he succeeded him, and had less adaptiveness to humanity in general. Giotto was more universal, more on a level with mankind, more a teacher and friend, less a prophet. Orgagna was of the latter class. His aspiration was to the sublime. Lofty in aim, pure in feeling, graceful and thorough in execution, he wonderfully impresses the spectator in whatever department he manifests his mind, whether in architecture as in the noble Loggia di Lanzi, whose spirit lifts heavenward; the sculptured Tabernacle of Orsaumichele, glorious in its virgin purity of work and sentiment; or in his marvellous fresco of the "Triumph of Death" in the Pisan Campo Santo, alive with the beauty and variety of invention and profound thought.

But in one respect he was not above the level of the moral feeling of his age. The prevailing religious specific then — as now with the majority of worshippers — was fear. Revenge was a virtue in the individual and state. Reformation of the criminal or forgiveness to the unfortunate was an unknown idea, popularly speaking. The greatest minds put faith in doing evil rather than good to their

enemies. Religion, as interpreted by theology, sanctioned this idea by the example of a vindictive Jehovah. If God delighted in the torment and destruction of sinners, why should not sinners feel an equal satisfaction under the delusion of mistermmed justice, in visiting upon those who had offended them, slaughter, exile, torture, and robbery ; in fine in making them as wretched as possible ? Under such a moral regimen, parties were ever suspicious and hostile. Humanity, however, frequently asserted its dignity, and counterbalanced great public wrongs by noble private virtues, so that the human heart was often more than a match for perverted doctrines. But, Guelf or Ghibelline, each government was alike enthusiastic for art, and sustained it with a lofty spirit to which more modern times afford no counterpart. Florence in particular was ever haughty, proud, ambitious — turbulent also, but jealous of her liberties, such as they were, and boasting that they “never bowed their heads to any master.”\* On one occasion they absolutely refused to receive an embassy from their German lord. Theirs was a spirit of self-exaltation. From out of the vice of republicans was born the virtue of the republic ; in the individual, self-exaggeration tending in the aggregate to national enterprise and prosperity. They boasted, but they also entertained grand conceptions. Religion was honored by their art, which equally gratified their pride. Recall the language of the decree of the Florentine Republic, ordering Arnolfo di Lapo to execute a design for their new Duomo : —

“Whereas the chief aim of a people of great origin being to act in a way that from its outward works every

\* Reply of Betto Brunelleschi, A. D. 1311, to the ambassador of Henry VII. of Germany, sent to extort from them an acknowledgment of their allegiance to the Empire. Villani, 443 *et seq.*

one should recognize its wise and magnanimous manner of proceeding, we order Arnolfo, our chief architect, to make a model or design for the complete rebuilding of St. Reparata with the greatest possible magnificence that the human mind is capable of conceiving; since it has been decreed in council, both public and private, by the most able men of this city, that nothing should be undertaken for the community that did not correspond to the ideas of its most enlightened citizens, moved by one mind, the grandeur and glory of the country.”

Nothing is hinted in this for the honor of God, but much for the greatness of the citizens. Holding themselves equal to any undertaking, their faith in themselves produced wonders. Nor would they allow any one to question their ability. They fined and imprisoned a stranger for presuming to doubt their means to execute all that they proposed, as a punishment for his lack of faith in the resources of the community.\*

We shall farther on contrast this civic pride of Florence with the devout spirit which animated the Sienese in similar undertakings, and which manifested itself correspondingly in their works.

\* At this period, Florence and its environs had one hundred and seventy thousand inhabitants. Its revenue was equal to three million dollars, or more than England furnished Queen Elizabeth two centuries later. There were two hundred manufactories of cloth, employing thirty thousand workmen, producing twelve million dollars annually. The annual gold coinage, the best in Europe, was equal to three million dollars, and eighty banks, some of which in their transactions excelled even the first of our day, were required to conduct its business, which embraced all parts of the world. All this prosperity was the result of her democratic energies, and was finally extinguished by the crafty policy of the family of the “father of his country,” Cosmo himself being the archtraitor. It is calculated that in less than one hundred and fifty years the rule of the Medici destroyed nine tenths of the population of Tuscany. When Philip II. of Spain gave Siena to the Duke of Florence, his ambassador at Rome told him he had given away six hundred thousand subjects. Now there are not more than one hundred and fifty thousand on the same territory.

Another peculiarity of the times was the grotesque idea of extracting amusement from the terrible mysteries of its denunciatory creed. Villani relates that on the 1st of May each quarter of Florence vied with the others in festivities. "The citizens of the Borgo San Friano, who had of old been accustomed to perform new and varied games, sent a proclamation through the town, that any one who might desire to learn news of the other world should come to the Carraia bridge and the banks near it on the kalends of May. Scaffolding was erected upon boats, and it was made to look like hell, with flames and other punishments and torments and demons, and men distorted, horrible to look upon, and other beings which had the likeness of naked spirits; and they placed them in different agonies, with tremendous cries, shrieks, and noise, which was a revolting and terrible thing to hear and look upon. This new show attracted many spectators, and the bridge being full and crowded, and of wood, broke down. Many persons died there; some were drowned; many hurt; so that what was meant for a jest turned out true, and as it was proclaimed in the outset, many went to learn news about the other world."

The horrible imagery of Dante's hell is based upon the faith of his age in physical torment as a system of divine retribution. The Almighty avenged himself—why should not man? Artists and poets but did that in their paintings and verses which their fellow-citizens, if angered with one another, did in deeds. All classes put unmentionable indignities and sufferings upon their foes. Hence it was that the artistic imagination, stimulated by theology, revelled in pictorial delineations of the fate of sinners, with every possible variety and aggravation of physical suffering, such as now would not be tolerated in art anywhere, and which still finds a home only in the morbid conceptions of



fanatical preachers of the Gospel of love and their unenlightened followers. Humanity has begun to believe in the superior anguish of offended morality; the still, small voice that will be heard; the worm that never dies except with the passing away of sin. But on our external plane of being, vivid suffering, in order to work out its lesson to our senses, involves a physical exhibition of its agony. We can note the rule of the spirit over the body by its unmistakable consequences upon the latter. Sin, implying a broken law, generates physical pain, as a secondary effect. Now we have learned that it is simply a result, warning and reformatory in divine economy. Then it was rather considered the right hand of ethical discipline and the final doom of unbelievers. Barbarity was common, because the tender mercies of the age were barbarous, and the demon-side of its faith cruel:

“All hope abandon—ye who enter here.”

*Inferno*, c. iii. v. 10.

Happily there is solace in Dante's material hell in its allegory, or perhaps we accept as such much of the imagery which had a frightful realism to mediæval minds. For it can scarcely be doubted that when the poets and painters divide hell into nine dread circles, each presided over by a demon, and as they descend growing more horrible with infinite torments that exhausted even their prolific invention to intensify, peopled with earth's former multitudes, their kin and neighbors among them, until the climax of infernalism is reached in the fourth zone of the ninth and last circle in the image of the monster Dis or Beelzebub, crunching and re-crunching, with gory appetite never quenched, in each of his three mouths, the mangled, suffering bodies of those they held to be the chief among sinners, they meant the people to accept it in all its hideous literalism. Need

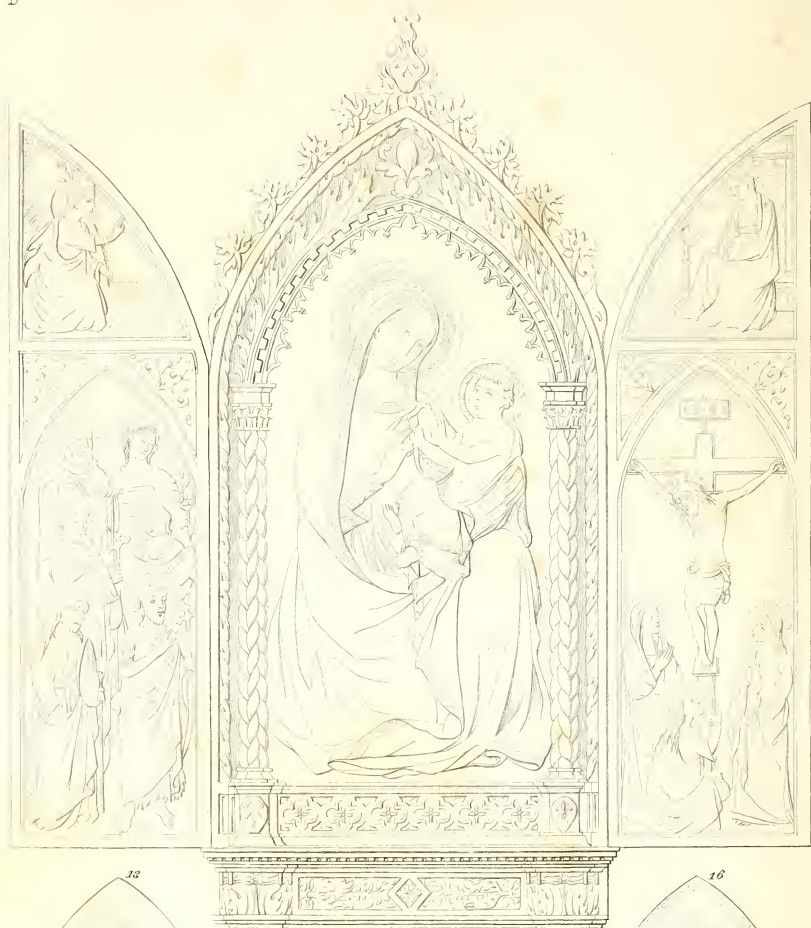


we be surprised that the aged Spinello Aretino, after having exhausted his invention in the creation of the foulest devil known to art, should have died of affright upon hearing in a vision his hideous monster indignantly demanding to know why he had treated him so shamefully, and where he had ever seen him so ugly.\* Evidently Spinello believed in his devil. Without a lively faith of this nature, imaginations would have been inadequate to create forms so intensely diabolical, and to find so much congenial employment for them in acts of such appalling horror as we find in one phase of Catholic art, paralleled it is true by the demonism of a certain class of Protestant teachings, down to the year of *Christian* grace 1860. The rule was simple. Make saints as attractive and devils as repulsive as possible.

We need not be surprised therefore, in this age of feeling, that the men of *feeling*, the poets and painters, should not have abandoned to churchmen the monopoly of placing their friends or enemies in heaven or hell, but should also save or damn, as impulse prompted, in virtue of their divine credentials of art. Accordingly Dante, Orgagna, and Michel Angelo, not to mention lesser men, conferred after this manner immortality upon some, who otherwise with their interment would have dropped forever out of human memories. Among those thus preserved by Orgagna is one Guardi, a sheriff, who had seized his goods for debt. The devil has clutched him with a hook, by which he drags him, frantic and shrieking, to the place of torment. Orgagna gives him for company the judge and the notary of the court that condemned him. Like Fra Angelico, he did not spare iniquitous ecclesiastics. One of his most striking figures is a hypocritical friar, who, attempting to sneak into

\* Vasari, vol. ii. p. 197.





School of Brabant 1425

Van der Weyden





the society of the good, is detected and driven back by a watchful angel.

The contests for souls, between the angels and demons who are drawing them out of the mouths of the dying and dead, the messengers of heaven being tender, graceful, and mighty, those of the bottomless pit fierce, fiery, and bestial, are a favorite topic of this period, and by no one more graphically treated than by Orgagna in his "Trionfo della Morte" at Pisa. Nor will we condemn imagery which so vividly brings before the popular apprehension the terrible or joyful results which must await the departure of each soul from its physical tenement. Indeed, until our eyes have become more opened to spiritual realities, we must rely upon similar graphic delineations to illustrate the perpetual struggle between good and evil which encompasses every human being. Orgagna maps out his "Hell" according to Dante and transcribes his imagery, after the approved conception of the common mind. But his better genius and poetical power are more favorably seen in the "Trionfo." The *rush* of Death through the air on his powerful, bat-like wings ending in sharp claws, armed with an immense scythe, hair floating wildly back with the rapidity of his swoop, the drapery clinging close to his attenuated figure which terminates in long feet with sharp talons, is most forcible. This terrible apparition suggests in every line and motion the descent of irresistible destiny. Its flight is towards the noble and beautiful who are enjoying themselves amid the honors, riches, and pleasures of life, and it scornfully overlooks the crowd of wretched and diseased ones, who are eagerly clamoring for it to cut them down. The artist puts into their mouths on a scroll the following invocation:

"Since nought of happiness to us remains  
Come then, O Death, — the cure for every ill,—  
Give our last support and relief from pain," etc.



Orgagna is thoroughly epic in feeling, endowing his figures with much characteristic sentiment, but in representing physical agony, like all others of his school, verging on caricature. His saints are uniformly serene and grand; his angels and archangels nobly beautiful, and filled with the sense of exalted power. His mind was deep and lofty, rather than broad and general. Equally successful in each department of art that he essayed, his predilection was for painting, though on his pictures he was wont to sign himself sculptor, and on his sculpture to inscribe himself painter. Less idiosyncratic than Michel Angelo, with like aspiration towards the sublime, beauty in him was more harmoniously wedded to strength. Both Orgagna and Spinello Aretino were the legitimate precursors of Luca Signorelli and Michel Angelo, in the mental quality and character of art; the defects of either party being the results of opposite tendencies growing out of the technical conditions of painting in their respective times; the one too much engrossed by sentiment to render full justice to design, and the other so captivated by the force of design as sometimes to overlook the more necessary ingredient of soul. Orgagna was, however, an adept in the mechanism of art as then practised, having a perfect command over material, so that it is rare to find works which have better resisted the action of time, or that equally well retain their original finish. And we must add that the grandeur and dignity of Orgagna's pictorial figures, their sculptural severity and lofty yet graceful idealization, with the simplicity and appropriateness of their accessories, are unexcelled by any of his contemporaries.\* Although a graphic depicter of the element of fear in religion, love was still more characteristic of him, and we can readily credit the assertion of Vasari, that his life was "pleasant, courteous, and amiable."

\* See pl. D, figs. 13, 14, 15, 16.

Spinello Aretino, whose acquirements were concentrated on painting, equally commands our respect, though not gifted with the varied genius of Orgagna. He belonged to Arezzo, was born about 1308, and we find him, like Titian, still vigorously plying his pencil when close on to one hundred years of age, and even then displaying a richness of invention and power of execution worthy of his prime. If the devil had not frightened him to death in a vision out of despite for his graphic incarnation of his diabolism, possibly Spinello would have continued his career still longer. He is fortunate in the fine preservation of a portion of his works, though that above alluded to, his favorite subject, "The Fall of the Rebel Angels," done in fresco in the church of St. Agnolo at Arezzo, has been, with the sacred edifice, long since ruined, so that with the exception of a few fragments uncared for on the walls of what is now a wretched habitation, we must depend upon the engraving by Lasinio for an adequate conception of its original fire and spirit. The archangel Michael, assisted by the heavenly hosts, is engaged in personal conflict with the seven-headed dragon of the Apocalypse and his attendant demons. He precipitates them over the walls of heaven, deep into the chasms of hell, where they lie, struggling with impotent fury to strike anew their majestic enemy. Satan, a second time given, transformed into the very beast of Sin, lies half buried beneath the mountains cast upon him. High over all, in the upper heavens, sits the Almighty, tranquilly enthroned amid the celestial powers, having *willed* the eternal discomfiture of the "old serpent."

In this composition, in great measure, Spinello has anticipated the invention of Milton.\* He musters before us the

\* May not the Protestant poet be indebted not a little to some of the noble frescoes of the Catholic school, which were well preserved when he visited Tuscany, for some of the picturesquely grand scenes and personages of his immortal poem?

calm, noble chivalry of heaven, strong and graceful in their repose beyond description. But when they strike, it is with the rapidity and glow of light; the eye recoils from the hideous variety of ugliness of their demoniac foes, and the terrific consequences of their overthrow upon themselves and nature. We seem to hear the roar and rush of their brutal forms with their hissing hate as they tumble headlong to the place prepared for them from the beginning; a dreary, hopeless region, where even a drop of water would outweigh the ransom of a kingdom.

Spinello's frescoes in the sacristy of the church of San Miniato near Florence, the "Life of St. Benedetto," somewhat unequal in excellence, are admirably preserved and full of interest. In his ninetieth year he was invited to Siena to decorate the Sala della Balìa of the Palazzo Pubblico. The subject chosen was the great struggle between the Empire and Papacy, represented by the Emperor Frederic V., surnamed Barbarossa, and the Popes Adrian IV. and Alexander III. He fully comprehended the antagonistic elements involved in this momentous struggle, and illustrated them in a series of paintings, remarkable for fidelity of expression, judicious selection of incidents, and vivid interblending of the "civil, military, and ecclesiastical life of the age," as Baron von Rumohr justly observes, into one comprehensive pictorial whole. Full of dramatic vigor, particularly excellent in delineating character, imitative or inventive as his compositions required, seizing upon the leading incident with historical exactness and picturesque effect, attentive to unity, intermingling the lights and shadows of emotions and by-scenes with great naturalness, less simple and tender than Giotto, in all other respects, he is to be considered as one of the most complete and attractive of his school. In color he is weak though pure. Vasari, in de-

scribing his sacred subjects, says of them, "there is an indescribable something of holiness and purity which induces reverence from men." Spinello's nobleness of life interpenetrated his paintings. He was as noted for his Christian charity as for his skill in art, and his native city still recalls with noble pride his heroism in the plague of 1383. Baldinucci in his brief notice thus touchingly sums up his virtues: "Finally in the city of Arezzo he passed on to the other life, leaving a great reputation for excellence in his art, and as a perfect Christian."

Parri Spinelli, his son, who was alive in 1444, followed his father's profession, and was noted for the length of his figures, extending them to eleven and twelve heads. They were delicately drawn, slight and flexible, with well-adjusted draperies. In coloring, his tints being admirably harmonized, he was highly praised. Over-application to his art shortened his days. He was a melancholy, solitary man, and in consequence not a favorite in society. Being calumniated, he painted an allegorical picture in the chapel of San Niccola, representing the tongues of his enemies in flames and devils keeping up the fires. In the air above, Christ was uttering maledictions, and on one side was inscribed "The Lot of the false tongue."

## CHAPTER VII.

Action to Repose. Epic to Lyric Painting. Siena, past and present. Its Religious Tone in Politics and Art. Statutes of its Painters. Taddeo Gaddi, 1300-1366, Simone Martini, 1284-1344, Jacobo di Casentino, and others. The Incredulity of Criticism. Lippo Memmi, 1357. Fra Martini of Assisi. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, 1265-1348. Ghiberti's Opinion of. His great Work at Siena. Object and Execution of Christian Art of this Period. The Character of the great Artists. Generation of weak Artists. Andrea Vanni, 1345-1413. Berna and Pietro di Puccio. Lorenzo Monaco. Taddeo di Bartolo, 1363-1422. Mysticism of Lyric Art. Why and Wherefore. Causes of its Influence or Repulsion. Language of Spirit more subtle and noble than of Fact under certain mental Conditions. Opposite Inspirations and Methods of the two Classes of Artists, Realists and Sentimentalists. Danger of exclusive Sensibility to either. The common End of their respective Excess. Right Aim in Taste. Bartolo's Successors at Siena, and the last of the true Giotteschi.

FROM action to repose is grateful. The trumpet of Epic art has thrilled us sufficiently for a while. Now let us listen to the lyre of the Lyric artists, and rejoice our ears in their songs of harmony, lying down beside them in pleasant pastures, serenely contemplating the bliss which they open to us of earth and heaven.

Between factious, self-poised Florence—the focus of Epic art, imperious and magniloquent, full of strong, earnest individualism, rough and ready, Guelf in politics, and so democratic that a noble, except by special privilege, was debarred civic rights—and Ghibelline Siena, chivalric and devotional, where was centred the Lyric sentiment, there was indeed a striking difference. In the early part of the fourteenth century, both were commercially and politically



prosperous, and abounded in riches and enterprise. Siena, however, enjoyed most tranquillity. Says its old chronicler, Brandone, A.D. 1317, "every one minded his own business, and all loved each other as brethren." A golden period, truly, for any people! And there was much in the artistic character of Siena, its social and political life, and, above all, its elevated religious tone, to induce one to credit the marvel with fewer grains of allowance than the common infirmities of human nature might seem to demand. At no other period of her history was she so flourishing. Her adult male population, numbered as citizens, was computed at seventy thousand, but this must have comprised the adjacent territory. Thirty-nine gates pierced her solid walls. Students from all parts of Italy flocked to her University. Her national spirit was vigorous, refined, and patriotic. Unhappily, in 1348 she was so grievously stricken with the plague that she lost nearly three quarters of her inhabitants, and never fully recovered from the blow. With the ever-shifting politics of Italy, she had also her bitter cup of adversity to drain. But no stranger, even now, enters Siena without being struck by its atmosphere of aristocratic repose, its religious quiet, the fine features of its women,—with their lustrous, dark eyes, and winsome softness of expression, transferred by her earliest artists to their Madonnas,—the urbanity of its people, and the purity of their tongue. On no other mediæval Italian city does the better spirit and the romance of its palmy days linger more fondly and lastingly. Its unity and harmony of scenery and feeling are particularly soothing and refining. The substance of its ancient virtue is still alive at heart. The fondness of the inhabitants for the souvenirs of their glorious past; the care and veneration with which they regard their numerous monuments;



the mediæval aspect of the entire city, with its battlements and towers still keeping guard as of yore ; its churches, palaces, and pictures, so scrupulously preserved and proudly shown ; the gray-haired, single-minded guardians, of either sex, of the treasures they exhibit, themselves seeming to have dropped out of the Past ; the thoroughly Sienese feeling of the citizens, and yet their pleasant acquiescence in the spirit of modernism : all wondrously wins upon our love and respect. And O Florence ! take pattern after the cleanliness of Siena. Cultivate that purity of soul which forbids the personal exposure and filthy defilement of her public places which your populace indulge in, respecting no beauty of edifice or sacred association, unless protected by the symbol of Christian salvation, making your thoroughfares stink foully in the nostrils of all Christendom. Learn, O Florentines ! that next to godliness ranks cleanliness, and sin no more.

It would be pleasant to show how nobly the women of Siena behaved in her hours of trial ; how their heroism in its fatal siege extorted from their enemy the “emphatic declaration that he would rather undertake to defend Siena with her women than Rome with her men, such as the men of Rome then were.” But her art has too many claims to permit even this tempting digression.

Siena was equally as jealous of its national honor as Florence, but, its religious tone being more humble and reverent, in all its decrees it first ascribed all glory to God, looking to Him alone as the fountain of safety and inspiration. Over the door of the great Council Chamber was inscribed “Whatsoever ye do in word and deed, do all in the name of Jesus Christ.” In the contract dated Oct. 9, 1308, between Duccio and the clergy of the cathedral to paint his celebrated altar-piece, he pledges himself

to do it "to his best ability, and as the Lord shall give him cunning."

A similar piety was universal in all such transactions. It raised the religious tone of the people, and gave a corresponding hue to public documents. Numerous artists from the neighboring towns, from Umbria, and even from Germany, flocked to Siena for instruction. There was exercised over all a moral surveillance, sustained by a rigid public sentiment, which contributed largely to maintain their art pure and devotional, its inherited tendency being contemplative and symbolical. United with this was a fondness for the lovely and peaceful in nature, the moment of repose in preference to that of action, and a rendering of their own souls, their loves, fancies, and thoughts, instead of going forth into outer, active life in search of its passions and incitements. Hence their constant exaltation of idea above design, their idealization of holiness or abstract creations, their love of those things in the natural world most suggestive of joy and peace; of life happy in the purity and freshness of its instincts; of colors emblematic of virtuous belongings and holy being; of hearts filled with the "peace that passeth understanding," the precious mysteries of atoning salvation, and unspeakable triumphs of Redemption. Delicacy and grace; moral and physical harmony; the realization of exalted idea in corresponding form; pure, simple colors, brilliant as gems; flowers and quietude; the absence of disturbing passion; the song of joy; faith triumphant; the sense of beatitude,—such were the prominent traits of Lyric art. It was less historical, less natural, less inclined to portraiture, less cosmopolitan, than the Epic; unequal to it in force and breadth, but its superior in spiritual beauty.

As late as 1438, in a decree regulating the election of

an architect to the Duomo, it is provided on the one hand that no person of immoral life in any respect, or who is *suspected* even of vice, shall be eligible to the office ; while, to duly honor whoever may be elected, to show the respect the republic entertains for an artist qualified for so important a post, and to increase its dignity, he is to be knighted and pensioned, with an annuity to his widow, if he leave one.

A decree of 1456 observes “that no state or supreme council can maintain itself and properly rule without the aid of the Omniscient God and his most Holy Mother.” The Duomo is styled “one of the eyes as well as the crown” of Siena, and the utmost respect demanded for divine worship.

When Taddeo di Bartolo was commissioned to paint the chapel of the Palazzo Publico, the ordinance ran, to do it in the most liberal manner, adorning it with “whatever figures, ornaments, gold, and other devices should seem expedient to him, for the ornament of said chapel and the *honor* of the republic,” the remuneration to be adjusted at the conclusion of the work by the award of two artists, one appointed by the state and the other by the painter.

When Duccio had completed his great picture, A. D. 1310, after having labored upon it three years, it was taken in solemn procession from his studio to the Duomo. First marched the ecclesiastics in rich vestments, chanting and burning incense ; then the civic authorities and a long file of citizens, all of whom had previously fasted, with lighted candles in their hands, doing solemn honor to that art whose primary inspiration was religion. All places of business were closed. Every bell in the city was eloquently rung, out of regard to “so noble a picture.” And after it was deposited upon the high altar, the remainder of the

day, so we learn from the contemporary records in the Library of the University, "was spent in prayer and almsgiving, beseeching God and his Mother, our Advocate, to defend us from evil, and to preserve us from the hands of all traitors and enemies to Siena."

Nor were the Sieneſe leſs careful to preſerve than to honor art. Mino, an artiſt otherwiſe unknown, in 1287 painted on the weſtern end of the great hall of the Palazzo Pubblico a grand freſco of the Virgin enthroned, under a canopy ſuſtained by the twelve apoſtles and the tutelary ſaints of Siena. On her knees ſtands the infant Jeſus, holding in his left hand the charter by which the city was beſtowed upon the Virgin on the eve of the victory of Mont'-Aperto. His right hand is uplifted in the act of bleſſing. Angels offering lilies kneel before Chriſt and his Mother. Twenty-eight years afterwards, it had become ſo injured by the ſmoke from the fires kept up in the hall that Simone Martini was employed to reſtore it. After which the citizens demanded an edict forbidding fires to be lighted near it, leſt a painting ſo "detectable to the eye, ſo rejoicing to the heart, and ſo grateful to each particular ſenſe of humanity," ſhould again ſuffer.

Enough has been educed to ſhow how ſolicitous Siena was to exalt religion, and to purify and conſerve art, ſuſtaining and honoring it with politic liberality and a correct appreciation of its moral and æſthetic value to the ſtate. Much of the fruit of this noble policy endures to this day; an eloquent monument of the dignified ſenſe and jealous ſolicitude both of rulers and artiſts, and in reproachful contrast with the materialism which, in common with the reſt of Italy, finally overpowered Siena, and cauſed even her art to become vapid and worthleſs.

Before proceeding to the painters themſelves, it is well

to note the characteristic spirit of their statutes. They date from the twelfth century, and form one of the oldest fraternities of the middle ages. A prolix document of 1355 particularly embodies their deep religious feeling. "Since," it says, "we are teachers to ignorant men, who know not how to read, of the miracles performed by virtue and in virtue of the Holy Faith, and the fountains of our faith are principally laid in the adoration and belief of one God in Trinity, and in God in infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite love and mercy; and since no undertaking, however small, can have a beginning or an end without these three things,—that is, without the power to do, without knowledge, and without the healthful love of our work (*senza con amore volere*); and since in God every perfection is eminently united, now to the end that in our calling, however unworthy it may be, we may have a good beginning and a good ending in all our works and deeds, we will earnestly ask the aid of the Divine grace, and commence by a dedication to the honor of the name and in the name of the most Holy Trinity."

Their ordinances further insisted upon fraternal relations among the members of their society, a punctual and close observance of all fasts and festivals, and upright and religious lives. They also provided "that any member of the guild who should dare to use in his work any gold, silver, or color, other than that he may have promised to employ, as for instance alloyed gold for fine gold, tin for silver, cobalt blue for ultra marine, indigo for azure, red ochre or carmine for cinabrese, should be punished and fined upon every conviction ten libri." Thus it was that sincerity of sentiment begot sincerity of work, and it is precisely in the works of the more pious artists of the Tuscan schools that the purity and value of pigments are most conscientiously



adhered to. Exceptions there were of inferior, unscrupulous men who did their work slovenly and cheaply, and pandered to stingy employers. But the spirit of religious art was in itself not only truthful, earnest, solemn, and dutiful, but strengthened by the maxims, rules, and exercises best calculated to keep the sacred flame bright and unsullied.

Cennino Cennini connects the use of good colors, especially in painting the Blessed Virgin, with religious duty, adding, in the simple honesty of his heart, that if the painter be underpaid, "God and our Lady will reward him in body and soul."

Of Lyric artists there is but one Florentine of this epoch ranking as a great master whom it seems to us expedient, from the general tone of his art, to transfer from his immediate natal associations to those which cluster more particularly about the Sienese painters. The Christian concord and generous emulation, with the lasting friendship which united Taddeo Gaddi (1300–1366) to Simone Martini of Siena (1284–1344), by a mistake of the early biographers called Memmi, because confounded with his brother-in-law, Lippo Memmi, are additional reasons for coupling their names under this head. And it seems natural that as congeniality of taste and feeling united them in life, there should exist in Taddeo's works a kindred expression to that of Simone's, who so conspicuously represents this branch of painting. But each of these distinguished artists, as was common to all the great masters of their school, had likewise the capacity for dramatic representation, which they more or less successfully indulged in. Consequently, they are classed as Lyric artists only because their inmost affections and usual artistic language ran in this direction.

Giotto, who was the godfather of Taddeo Gaddi, re-



ceived him into his studio at twelve years of age, where he remained until his master's death. Being eminent also as an architect, he was appointed his successor for completing the Campanile of Florence. Force or originality is not his characteristic. He was a cultivated scholar and an apt pupil, repeating with weakened expression the acquirements of his master. Less comprehensive and penetrating, lacking dramatic power and profound invention, unequal in design, occasionally in details excelling Giotto, and at other times repeating the faults of the previous generation of painters, narrow, half-closed eyes, bodies wanting in symmetry and proportion, sometimes with heads placed awry, warmer in color, yet as a whole possessed of grace, tenderness, and refinement, highly spiritual, simple, sweet, and poetical, in art and character, a Christian and gentleman,—such was the friend of Simone and cherished pupil of Giotto.

While with the latter, his highest ambition seems to have been to reproduce him. After Giotto's death, at first he appears by contrast with his master hard and timid, as if unaccustomed to go alone. The best specimens of this period are the well-preserved frescoes of the Spanish Chapel of Sta. Maria Novella at Florence. But in those of Sta. Croce, we find him the full-fledged artist, with an individuality and variety of thought and style remarkably pleasing, especially in his charming composition of the "Dedication of the Virgin."

Sachetti, a contemporary writer, in his one hundred and thirty-sixth tale relates that at a circle of artists Andrea Orgagna proposed for discussion the following question: "Who is the greatest master, setting Giotto out of the question?" Some maintained that Cimabue was; others Bernardino (Orgagna?), Buffalmacco, and Stefano. When

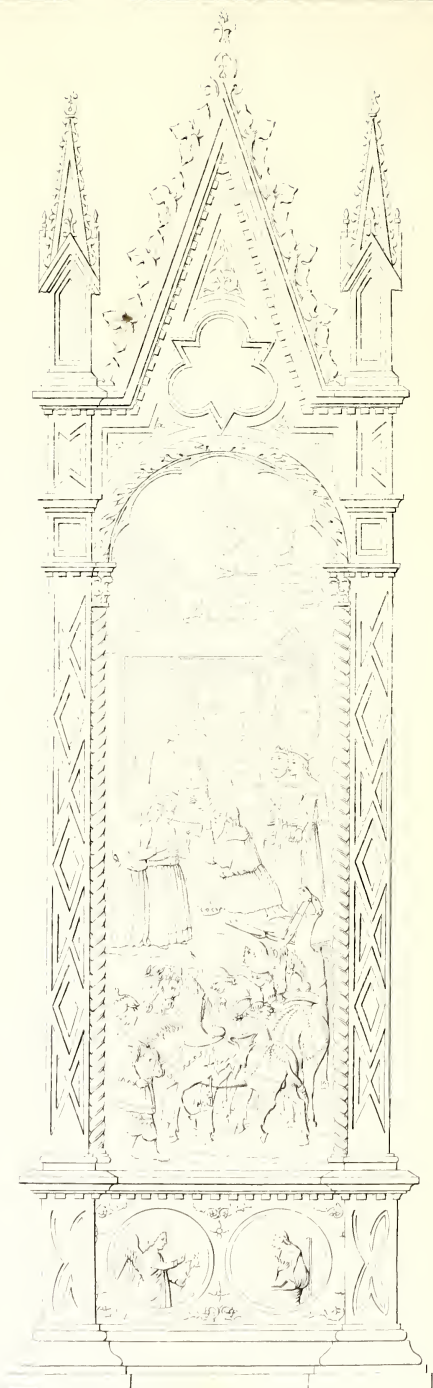
it came to Taddeo's turn, he simply remarked "Truly these are very able painters, but the art is decaying every day." This anecdote betrays his timid, conservative character and fear of those innovations which ultimately completed the progress initiated by his master, to whose style and manner he evidently would have restricted art.

When dying, he consigned his son Angelo to his friend and scholar, Jacobo di Casentino, who, in conjunction with Giovanni di Milano was to teach him the practice of his art and the duties of a Christian. Jacobo was also the master of Spinello Aretino. Of him and his contemporary, Bernardino Daddi, time has spared us no authentic specimens. Other third-rate artists of this period are spoken well of by various authors, but they followed in the beaten track of greater men, weakly repeating their thoughts and styles. Many altar-pieces and easel pictures that have come down to us ambitiously baptized, are doubtless the productions of these imitative or mechanical minds, who, from intimate association as scholars or hirelings with distinguished artists, managed to acquire not only considerable skill but subsequently have appropriated to themselves through the accidents of time not a little of their fame also. How far Jacobo is to be ranked with these we have few means of observing, though in the pictures attributed to him there is nothing to elevate him above this class. He labored until ninety years old, active to the last.

We now come to the most brilliant of the Lyric artists, Simone Martini. He is so filled with the joy of life, so prolific in grace and beauty, so tender in sentiment, so noble in character, delicate and bright in color, so copious in all that has its origin in the finer sensibilities of our being, with a keen, sympathetic eye for nature, that one is irre-

sistibly attracted towards him at first sight. Like Giotto, he travelled much, being warmly welcomed everywhere he went. Indeed he was second only to him in reputation. At Avignon he painted the chapel of the papal palace, but this fresco with his portrait of Laura, praised by Petrarch, has disappeared. The best remaining works of his are the frescoes in the Lower church of St. Francis at Assisi, and those well-preserved ones painted in friendly competition with Taddeo Gaddi in the Spanish Chapel of Sta. Maria Novella at Florence. German criticism, with its obdurate predilection for material facts and incredulity of unbelief, overlooking too often the stronger evidence of sentiment and feeling, has questioned Simone's claim to the authorship of these frescoes, simply because Guidilotto, the founder of the chapel, in his will bequeathes certain moneys in trust to his brother Domenico, to *finish* the paintings. Now this was in 1355. As Simone died in 1344, it is asserted that he could not have painted them. But Taddeo Gaddi also worked here. He was alive eleven years after the date of the will, and the more rational presumption would be that the trust referred to him and not to Simone. Förster objects also to the authorship of the latter, on the ground that their chief character is Thought rather than Feeling, which is Simone's usual manifestation. But these frescoes were done in his prime. It is true that his idiosyncrasy was towards feeling. His mind, however, had a wide grasp and universal action. He had gained much by travel and study. Accordingly, while we perceive in these paintings the Sienese type of coloring and sentiment, there is also a deeper vein of thought and more lively movement than is common in that school. How could it be otherwise in painting in companionship with the greatest of the Giotteschi, and under the direct inspiration of the works of the master











himself? An eclectic mind spontaneously imbibes truth and beauty from every available source, developing itself in corresponding directions. Besides the internal evidence of the frescoes themselves, the unquestioned acquiescence of so many centuries in ascribing them to Simone Martini, a foreigner too and a rival, amid a jealous, invidious population, is of great weight in his favor.

There is a sort of criticism which consumes truth as rust eats into iron. It delights in labyrinthine erudition and destructive power. Content to demolish and careless to rebuild, on the slightest apparent discrepancy of fact or method it essays to overturn long-received opinions. While admitting the value of modern investigation into the Past, particularly the keen-sighted German, we must not be too readily seduced from our allegiance to what has been sanctioned by the testimony of time, when sustained by internal evidence of character and probabilities of circumstance, on the discovery of a stray date or a perhaps carelessly worded document. If previous cause has existed to distrust tradition, such evidence is often conclusive. But if otherwise, it is quite as likely to err itself or to be misapplied as that the entire sentiment of a work and belief of many generations of judges should be in the wrong.

The fresco on the northern wall is an elaborate, skilfully composed, symbolical composition, illustrating Divine and Human Truth in charge respectively of the Church and Civil Power, the one represented by the Pope, the other by the Emperor. It contains portraits, so Vasari declares, of Cimabue, Laura, Petrarch, and Simone himself, with a representation of the Duomo of Florence according to the original design of Arnolfo di Lapo. Some of the groups are forcibly rendered, with marked individuality of thought and action. On the eastern wall, in one grand composition,

are the Procession to Calvary, the Crucifixion and the Descent into Hades; somewhat crowded and confused, but with intense feeling, and much dignity and grace in individuals. In this chapel we have ample means of comparison between Simone and Taddeo. In originality, scope, and strength, with softer and more harmonious coloring, a keener sympathy for nature, animals spiritedly given, and an evident love of landscape, the preference is decidedly with the former. Yet in his figures representing the seven theological sciences the latter is very truthful and noble, and the entire chapel affords one of the most interesting monuments of fresco painting of the fourteenth century now extant.\*

No description can adequately represent the compositions of the great masters. The sole way to know them is by direct study, or by means of photographs taken from the originals. Feeling the impotence of multiplying words to do justice to them, we shall but briefly allude to characteristic specimens, rather as suggestions for study and comparison than as attempts at forestalling either. Moreover it should be borne in mind, that in giving in general terms the distinguishing traits of artists, our standard of

\* Pl. F, fig. 17, a wing of an altar-piece, the design of a portion of which is preserved among the drawings of the old masters in the Uffizi, is a favorable specimen of Simone's manner. In the upper portion, where the angels announce the glad tidings to the shepherds, instead of the usual star, he gives the effigy of the divine babe itself in the heavens, swathed after the fashion of infants in Italy. The group of horses, camels, and attendants in the lower part, not crowded, though in so small a space, is most spirited and natural; admirably composed, with a truth of movement that reminds one of Horace Vernet. Its perspective and foreshortening are quite remarkable, and in color it is peculiarly rich and harmonious. Beside the Virgin are two graceful female attendants, one of whom is Mary Salome, who having been present at the birth to assist the Madonna, vowed henceforth, so runs the pious legend, to wait both on mother and son, as long as either lived. Simone heightens the poverty of the lowly birthplace of the Saviour by contrasting it with magnificent architecture in its close vicinity.

judgment is based on their *best* and most known works, while the illustrations of this volume are simply to give an idea of some of their traits, taken from specimens visible to the American public.

Lippo Memmi, who died in 1357, worked with Simone Martini, but was in every respect his inferior. Another of his pupils, a nephew, named Fra Martini, painted at Assisi between 1347 and 1358. Nothing is known of Simone's private life. We can infer from the beautiful, elevated type of his heads, and from the silence of history, that it was calm, successful, and pleasant. Had he been a wit like Giotto, or the petted friend of sovereigns, we certainly should have known it. Contemplative, amiable, and pure-minded he certainly was; for his pictures declare that. Petrarch was warmly attached to him. Tradition makes him in person as ugly as Giotto. But his portrait\* displays a noble head, expressive of much refinement and intelligence. Indeed, if we may trust the same source for that of Giotto, he by no means warranted Dante's uncomplimentary wit.

One of the most distinguished artistic families of this period was that of Lorenzo or Lorenzetto of Siena. The father, whom it is unnecessary more particularly to mention, flourished in the latter part of the thirteenth century; a clever artist, but now remembered only in connection with his celebrated sons, Ambrogio and Pietro Laurati, both painters of marked originality and power.

Ambrogio (1265-1348) divided with Simone Martini the empire of art at Siena. He excelled in historical as well as allegorical and religious compositions. Among his townsmen, Simone was the most popular. This was owing to his being more readily understood. Ambrogio was profounder in thought and grander in execution, if credit can

\* See Vasari's *Lives*, Lemonier's edition.

be given to the eulogium of Ghiberti upon his most celebrated painting, "The Career of a Franciscan Missionary," formerly in the cloisters of the church of St. Francesco at Siena, but now no more. According to him, it was "a marvellous thing truly." One scene represented the martyrdom of some proselyting monks by order of the Sultan. At the instant of their decapitation a violent earthquake, accompanied with a terrific thunder-storm, took place, creating the wildest uproar and confusion of the elements and affright among the Moslem crowd. One is thrown from his horse and killed. Soldiers and people, palsied by terror, know not whither to fly for protection. Huge hailstones strike them to the ground. A furious hurricane swells the elemental strife, and overturning the tallest trees or wrenching off their stoutest branches, sends them madly whirling through the air. So reads the record left of an effort, as bold as it was rare, to represent a convulsion of nature, by one of a school whose sentiment and technical power were adverse to such scenes.

We have, however, evidence of the capacity of Ambrogio, still existing, though in an injured condition, in that noble museum of art at Siena, the Palazzo Pubblico, in a series of frescoes, the subject of which is "Good and Evil Government." They form an elaborate allegorical composition, covering a large space, filled with majestic symbolical figures and graphic scenes, warm and rich in tone, more inclining to Duccio than to Simone in those respects, highly poetical, and intended to convey a grand moral lesson to the factious Italian communities, which it would have been well for all had they, in its prime, fully noted and inwardly digested. Now, owing to bad restoration and the corroding effects of time, it is shorn of its original splendor; its technical defects are prominent; and, like an

often-told tale, its spirit has departed, and nought remains but the shadow of its former self. Still the lover of art and student of history will find much to arrest his attention. The consequences of good and evil rule — peace, happiness, and security on the one hand; on the other, lust, license, tyranny, and cruelty — are strikingly contrasted, by the scenes which the civil strifes of the time rendered but too familiar to every one, whilst the intervals of domestic quiet testified, through the enterprise of the peoples, to the truths which Ambrogio idealized into a seductive picture of the blessings of well-ordered civilization. Either spectacle was made emphatic by graceful, dignified, and highly significant personifications of the Virtues and Vices, and by majestic figures, male and female, representing Good Government and Siena; Evil Government being correspondingly personified, but with horns and the emblems of wickedness. To make its meaning more clear, the artist inscribed upon it, in scrolls, appropriate texts and verses, the latter probably composed by himself.

If the execution of this class of paintings be greatly inferior to the conception, — and this age is disposed to criticise the work more than the thought, — we must bear in mind that the principal object of the religious masters was to Teach — to Preach, we may say. Printed books were not. Manuscripts were scarce and expensive. The age delighted in the language of the senses. The people had neither time nor inclination for abstract studies. The masses had to be addressed in poetical, pictorial expression, appealing quickly, forcibly, and pleasantly to their moral and mental faculties. The arts, consequently, were material mediums of knowledge and religion. Painting was an Encyclopedia of facts, a Manual of duties and exhortation. Hence the chief concern of the artist was to convey his idea close-



ly home to his audience. Fresco painting was the oratory of art. It addressed itself with sensuous eloquence to the unlettered multitude, while easel pictures were the books of mediæval life, the tracts for household edification. Both artist and spectator were chiefly governed by one object in art. Not that born of the next century, and which, at first legitimate and truthful, sought simply to wed reason to sentiment, and to give to artistic expression its correct aspect, finally degenerating, as we shall have occasion to see, into barren thought and lifeless dexterity; but to convey homilies for guidance in temporal life, and, by pictorial and plastic prophecies and revelations, to open the sight to the joys and woes of eternity. Imaginations were spiritually exercised. Ideas drawn from the abstract, mystical, or doctrinal, sought suggestive forms; going to nature not so much for models as for hints; content, if successful in incarnating the incorporeal into sensuous organization sufficiently well, as with loose rein of thought and hand, to be intelligible to their audiences. Hence their prolific imagery, profound symbolism, deep meaning, graceful or grand sentiment, spiritual rendering, and faithful interpenetrating of matter as color and form with the instinct of their idea; causing, as by the touch of Moses, the rude rock to give forth living waters for thirsty souls. Theirs were interpretations more than delineations. They did not so much copy as create. Art, with them, was the reflection of the inner rather than the outer life. We find, in consequence, much carelessness, even rudeness, of drawing, quaintness of conception, and a panoramic movement or repetition; a naïveté and frankness; an absence of concealment or artifice; in short, a childish recklessness as to what, two centuries afterwards, came to be considered as the highest efforts in painting: all of which has a peculiar

fascination to those who value sincerity, straightforwardness, and earnestness, based upon deep thought and holy motive, above, at first view, the more captivating but superficial graces of art on which modernism at large pins its faith and love. Hence a necessity, if we would understand, not to say sympathize with, their art, of making ourselves fully acquainted with its Intent; first by its abstract principles, and secondly, by a knowledge of the doctrines, traditions, religious ideas, and facts which underlie its meaning, and the rules of expression, more theological than æsthetic, to which it ever remained more or less subject. This done, we shall be less impatient at the multitude of compositions based upon the religious faith of the age, repetitions though they be of the same themes; for the mediævalists, like ourselves in modern art, with the landscape and *genre* subjects, but gave free utterance to what was next their hearts.

Our artists being Preachers of the Word, it behooved them to give heed as to what manner of men they were. Between their profession and their deportment the public expected the same holy connection that we demand in our ministers of the Gospel. Nor were they oftener disappointed. Nothing is more winning than the simple eulogiums with which the old chroniclers sum up the biographies of the principal artists of this period; attesting their literary attainments, studious habits, courteous manners, sincere affections; in short their virtue, godliness, and single-heartedness as Christian gentlemen.

Of few is Vasari more emphatic in praise than of Ambrogio Lorenzetti. "In his youth," he says, "Ambrogio studied literature, and found her through his whole life a useful and pleasant companion, making him no less agreeable and amiable as a man than excellent as an artist." His society

was sought by the learned and refined, and his country honored him with important official trusts. "In habits and manners he was every way commendable;" content with the blessings of the hour and receiving with placid mind alike the frowns or smiles of fortune; an example in every respect of that deportment which should at all times accredit genius to the world. And so Ambrogio passed cheerfully and piously from this life to a better shortly after completing his eighty-third year, a victim most probably to the pest which in 1348 cut short so many noble lives in Siena.

He was succeeded by a generation of weak artists, who have left behind them nothing remarkable. Among them was Andrea Vanni (1345-1413), the painter of the "Procession to Calvary," of which Sieneſe tradition states that the Wandering Jew in passing through Siena certified to the correctness of the likeness of the Saviour. Berna and Pietro di Puccio left works that Vasari attributed to Buffalmacco. This error shows that the semi-Byzantine style obtained much later among the Sieneſe than the Florentines. Berna was killed by a fall from a scaffold while at work in the Duomo of San Gimignano. The people with their usual enthusiasm for artists went daily to suspend offerings and eulogistic verses at his tomb.

There are artists of this epoch singularly sweet and spiritual, and so celestial, if the comparison be admissible, in their tones of color, that one does not readily forgive time for withholding their names. Of such a character is the small Triptych, No. 61, in the Academy at Siena; the very embodiment of heavenly purity and chastity; literally a pearl of a Madonna, who, robed on white, floats on clouds of blue towards heaven, the loveliest interpretation of beatific vision in that largely spiritualized collection of art.

Don Lorenzo, a Camaldese monk of Florence, was an

artist of remarkable purity of life; one who imparted to his paintings an elevated, lyrical sentiment of a strictly religious character, as befitted his profession. He was progressive, though his style was drawn from the purest sources of the Giotteschi, with flowing, graceful lines, at times exaggerated, and with clear, pure coloring and a keen feeling for the joyous and innocent in nature and the glories of immortality, particularly perceptible in his love for angels and kindred accessories. His compositions are simple, highly finished, and very rare. They relate chiefly to the Life of the Virgin. One dated 1413 is in the church of Cerreto near Certaldo in Tuscany; others in the galleries and churches of Florence. All these bespeak a native genius which if it had not been too much shaded by conventual rigor might have developed into greater strength and comprehensiveness.

Whilst in Florence the direct Giottesque succession was rapidly being overshadowed and extinguished in the progressive development of other characteristics, it held its ground more firmly in Siena through the influence of Taddeo di Bartolo (1363-1422), an artist of deserved reputation. Following the track of feeling and conception of his predecessors, he was successful in attaining originality of style and thought, marked by depth, strength, and refinement. His most important pieces, executed between 1406 and 1414, are well preserved in the chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena. Those of the vestibule are drawn from Roman history, and represent the gods and great men of Rome, from which city Siena claims descent. They are allegorically introduced to the intent to impress upon rulers the necessity of avoiding the civil discords by which Rome lost her liberties, and of giving heed to the examples of Cicero, the Scipios, and others of her patriots and heroes, if they would

rival their virtues. But Taddeo is more at home in purely Christian compositions, especially the "Death-scene of the Virgin," in which the apostles are gathered about her bed, St. John kneeling at her feet, to receive her farewell. In a second compartment, as she expires, our Saviour receives her soul into his arms in the form of a little child, angels and apostles being grouped around, the latter bitterly grieving, unconscious of the presence of their Master. The composition is Byzantine, made more touching and significant by the imagination of Taddeo. The burial and resurrection are equally well treated. In the latter, she ascends from the sepulchre, in her earthly form, buoyed up by cherubs, at the call of her son, who takes her hand. The grief-stricken apostles, like most earthly mourners with their eyes unopened to the glorious realities of immortal life around and above them, gaze bewildered into the vacant tomb. But the Christian artist would have us see the entire scene as revealed to his spiritual sense, and take heart therefrom.

Taddeo di Bartolo's compositions are rich and varied, combining strength with repose. We miss the delicacy, freedom, and grace of Simone Martini, and his exquisite sympathy with external nature. But there is instead a rare insight into the soul and its spiritual conditions. His works greatly influenced subsequent religious artists, especially the Umbrians. The type of his Madonnas and sacred personages he derives from the ideal creations of the earliest masters; the full, rounded faces and unearthly dignity of Ugolino, Duccio, and Cimabue, Byzantine in feature, rapt and mystical in expression, with the somewhat improved modelling and design of his time. In drapery he shows a corresponding advance. But the union is not a happy one. For whilst the abstract beauty that charac-



terized the former painters is well reproduced, enough accuracy in drawing and knowledge of anatomy are displayed to provoke technical criticism. Besides, the moment the artist oversteps the line which divides the spiritual ideal from the natural and human, seeking to reconcile two widely differing principles of style, he confounds both and necessarily fails. The reason is obvious. A religious artist, aiming at spiritualities, conscious of the impotence of material to go beyond the mere suggestion of his motive, used gold and color to that end, conveying his meaning more by qualities of ornament and types of forms — spiritual hieroglyphics as it were — than by scientific handling. The mystery and vagueness of the thought with the corresponding exaltation of sentiment and profuse use of those vehicles which in their purest and simplest conditions, most strongly correspond to or suggest spiritual ideas, contributed to strengthen his intent. This, with the feeling that, like St. Paul, the sight of the ecstatic artists is at times let into that world nigh but invisible to us all except through a power of prayer or miracle vouchsafed to but few of earth's children, explains the deep hold that such painters as Fra Angelico, Sano di Pietro, Lippo Dalmasio, and their class have upon souls impressible to divine mysteries, and who are themselves penetrated with unutterable longings to solve immortality and find a home amid those glorious realities so imperfectly foreshadowed by faith and hinted at by the creative imagination of exceptional artists, preciously gifted by Heaven with the power of manual prophecy and revelation. Benevolent wisdom screens from earthly view, by means of material organization, celestial scenes which it is not yet prepared to look upon and live. But the craving after a realization of spiritual ideas is common to most men. We hearken curi-



ously for whispers from the other life, and cling fervently to the skirts of those souls that, more favored than we, penetrate thereunto. Persuade us of honesty and sincerity and we admit their credentials, in the degree of their capacity to bring down to us from above the manna we seek. And we test its sweetness by responsive affinities garnered from those subtle instincts and that haunting consciousness of immortal life, whose cheering radiance neither the shadows of materialism nor the fogs of reason can entirely eclipse. To those who, actually hopeless or voluntarily blind, are incapable of receiving confirmation of spiritual truths from that art which is the correspondence between the seen and the unseen, and who, content with the things of sense, deny those of the spirit, such interpretations are foolishness and inanity. The rattling of the dry bones in the valley of death is more substantial and true to them. But there is a multitude that no man may number whose hearts are quickly lifted up, momentarily though it be, out of the sphere of the natural into the supernatural by those fellow-men, poets or painters, in whom the supernal element is large and deep. We do not measure their communications by the laws of physical science and experience; but through a spiritually quickened imagination soul overpowers sense, and we escape with them into a region of no less substantial, though infinitely more refined, sensibilities than those of earth. The artist therefore, who would succeed in this translation of ourselves out of ourselves into his spiritual point of view, must beware how he attracts outward senses by displays of academic rules and material artifice. The instant these become obvious, as mere effects of skill on his part, his higher prerogative falls to the ground, and we are left to judge him by the standard of nature's obvious laws. Not that there should not be cor-

rect drawing and graceful design in the highest art ; but it must be wholly subsidiary to thought. Exalted topics, a prayerful peering into eternal life, and the thorough carrying out of the above principle, partly from moral sense and partly constrained by technical ignorance, insured the success of the purists in art in the language of spirituality. Success it was, such as art has never attained before nor since. And no Madonna, however lovely in her humanity, nor spectacle of angels and saints, in all the sensuous attractiveness of strict naturalism, however correct in drawing, harmonious in coloring, and strong in projection by the subtleties of chiaroscuro and foreshortening, whether of Titian or Correggio, in comparison with the golden adornments, naïve accessories, flatness, and crude outlines of earlier paintings, repudiated as barbarisms, and with the errors of design also the virtues of sentiment,—no such painting, we repeat, affects the unbiased spectator half so emphatically with religious feeling as the dignity and holiness of that art that was born of Orgagna, Giotto, Cavallini, and a host of kindred minds. Both classes of artists aimed at success by different methods and from opposite inspirations. Individual preferences depend upon the respective cultivation awarded to soul or sense, based upon primary sensuous or spiritual impressibility. There is equal danger in exclusive sensibility to either. As before stated, contradictory though it seems at first thought, the reaction from each extreme is to sensualism : the one ending in superstition, and the other in materialism. Consequently, in art as in life, we should be cosmopolitan in taste, appreciating excellence of every variety and degree, led captive by no single thought or feeling, but cultivating all our powers for the entire lawful enjoyment and use of our being, in reference to the exalted future which awaits the soul that

elects the life spiritual and eternal in preference to the life external and sensual.

This digression, though suggested by Taddeo di Bartolo's pictures, has led farther from him than we anticipated. Let us return. His color inclines to the deep tones of Duccio, but without his finish and harmony; for there is something harsh and hot in his predominating reddish browns, and he liberally uses that under-tint of green so common with the early Sienese painters. He is the last great master of the primitive semi-Byzantine succession. Domenico, his nephew, for a while followed his example, but subsequently went over to naturalism. Among the last artists of any repute in Siena who adhered to gold backgrounds and the old style was Lorenzo di Pietro Vecchietta (1402-1480), who was also a sculptor; a cold, mannered, hard painter, feeble in color, though not destitute of dignity of sentiment. He was of a sad, solitary turn of mind. Although more successful in the sister-art, he always preferred to sign his works as a painter. At Siena he represents the decadence of the direct Giottesque style, as do the Bicci family at Florence, but never like them did he degrade painting to the level of manufacture.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The religious Idealism of the Giotteschi — their Subjects and Limits. The Phenomena of Progress. Birth of Individualism in Painting. Its Definition. Two Currents, Ascetic and Ecstatic. Pietro di Lorenzetti, 1270–1342. Andrea del Castagno, 1410–1480, the Gibbeted. Difficulty of comprehending the extreme Purists and Mystics. Their peculiar Stand-point in Faith and Art. Reason at Fault. Ecstatic Feeling the Guide. Saints Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena. The Dangers and Tendencies of their exceptional Feeling. Saintly Artists. Lippo Dalmasio, 1376–1410. Sano di Pietro, 1406–1481. Fra Angelico, 1387–1455. Analysis of Motives and Styles. Color as identical with Character. The immediate Scholars of Fra Angelico. The Sienese Painters, Francesco Martini, 1470, Sassetta, 1450, Giovanni di Paolo, 1428–1462. Beautiful Sonnet to the Virgin as the living Faith of the Times.

THUS far we have followed the course of the great tidal wave of artistic Progress, set in motion by Giotto and his brethren, on the purely Christian plane of motive, influenced to a certain extent by Byzantine compositions, but free in expression and manner, until in the lapse of nearly two centuries it had exhausted itself, and was rapidly yielding to innovations of a different inspiration. All that has been reviewed, in point of character, was latent in Giotto himself. There were variations and departures from him; artists who improved in design or color, and displayed individual force or feeling; but none that surpassed him in original genius, or gave any new and powerful impulse to painting. Orgagna, Spinello, Martini, the Lorenzetti, Giotto, and Taddeo Bartolo, in the main, trod in his steps; not feebly or unworthily, but as comprehending his mission and carrying it on to its legitimate issue. But after them came a

series of feeble minds and unskilful hands, whose poor productions reconciled the public mind to the fresh changes which the spirit of progress had already begun in art.

We have observed that the old phase was characterized by strict religious idealism. Thought and manner kept together in the same broad channel. There were general types and traditional likenesses and conventional forms of composition, which were closely followed and rarely departed from, because orthodoxy in art and religion were much the same. Portraiture was exceptional and confined to noted individuals of the day; not, as obtained later, introduced as sacred personages, but in their proper character and relations. Giotto led the way in this. Subjects taken from other sources than those approved or suggested by the Church and indorsed by the current religious sentiments were extremely rare. Dante's allegories, Petrarch's songs, and, more uncommon yet, tales of chivalry, classical history, and pagan mythology, furnished a few topics. But one must diligently search to discover such pictures, and when found, we perceive that they are treated chiefly in a moral or scholastic aspect and in the same chaste and dignified tone that belonged to the more popular ecclesiastical subjects. We have met with no specimen of the latter inspiration before Angelo Gaddi.\* Giotto bequeathed historical composition to his followers. Simone Martini in 1328 painted the earliest equestrian portrait known in Italian art, that of Guido Riccio, a Sienese chieftain, in an historical painting, representing Siena and the siege of Montemassi, with the military machines of the day, a fresco on a large scale in chiaroscuro, still in fine condition on the

\* A beautiful octagonal picture in the possession of Seymour Kirkup, Esq., Florence, representing *The Knight's Tale*, a story put into verse both by Chaucer and Dryden.



walls of the Council Hall in the Palazzo Publico at Siena. But historical pictures outside of the Bible were uncommon. The scriptures, traditions, legends, and dogmas of the Church, with its numerous army of saints and martyrs, continued to be prolific themes of art, varied by allegory for purposes of instruction or devotion, and treated in the Gothic manner of golden backgrounds and elaborate ornamentation, the mechanical part being subordinated to the abstract idea.

Peculiar as were the attractions of this system, art still lacked full scope of progress, because not sufficiently emancipated from ecclesiastical control. But mind, once habituated to even a limited freedom, is incited to try all things. Though not promptly sagacious in separating the tares from the wheat, once in motion its inherent momentum inclines it to push experiment and problem to their uttermost issues. If the leaven of freedom cannot work off its lees, society declines. By no other process may questions that concern humanity be fully solved. Once proven, no fact or truth is lost. Whatever anguish its birth-throes may have cost the human race, there it remains, the fruit of an eternal principle, added to the sum total of knowledge in store for coming generations. Each epoch has its particular virtues and vices. Nature does not repeat her work. She changes, but retrogrades never. However golden, therefore, any fragment of the Past may seem, it is so only by the contrast of its absolute good, garnered into our harvest of Wisdom, with present evils. The sediment of Progress has sunk to the bottom of the stream of Time, while its surface glistens with the rich rays of the setting sun, warming it into soft, dewy beauty, laden with repose and alive with the gladsome associations of the vanishing day. This hour of time is ever more full of charm, from the sense of labor *done* and the *hope* of the morrow, than



the dazzling magnificence which ushers in the rising sun, all-glorious though it be in its fire-lit chariot, reflecting light straight from the precious stones that garnish the walls of the city of Heaven itself. That speaks of labor *to be done* and toil and heat to be borne. Joy is with the Victory. Fatigue and Doubt with the Strife of Life. Hence the greater delight of most men, in counting the gains, in looking back upon the bright reflections of history, than in looking forward to those trials and struggles out of which as honeycomb from the carcass of the lion, is to issue their own sweets. Lot's wife left a numerous progeny, content to be salt, so that they may ever gaze backwards. But Progress pets no one. Time has given it a duty to perform and destiny shapes its course. We can neither avert nor avoid it. At its appointed hour, each phase comes, grows, and goes—morning, noon, and night—answering completely all questions honestly put to it, and involving men in a web of cause and effect out of which there is no escape save by the beaten track of experience. In this normal movement of humanity, the decay of one series of events fertilizes the human soil for another, whose tendency is to correct the errors of its progenitors, laying one more stone on the cairn of history; then in its turn verging to one-sidedness and extremes, it slowly dies, leaving an embryo successor to perpetuate the ceaseless role of Progress.

Painting, though the fairest daughter of civilization, has no exemption from the common destiny. It was now to evoke a new spirit, needed for its further development; that of INDIVIDUALISM.

By individualism we mean the independent action of each artistic mind, looking to nature at large, history, and humanity for inspiration, moulding itself not in accordance simply to theological dictation or the wide-spread feeling of

a people, but from its own inward bias creating new methods, introducing new ideas, in short establishing its right of choice and personality of expression to the whole cycle of objects, motives, scenes, and passions that interest men as well through their sensuous and intellectual as their religious faculties.

This new life-blood had become indispensable to art, for, as has been shown, its Giottesque phase had stagnated. Men had wearied of its sameness. Other incitements were required to animate them. These were generated by a new and more auspicious Declaration of its Independence. But one of its primary manifestations was to infuse new life and spirituality into strictly religious art itself.

Before entering upon an analysis of the great stream which flowed from this new fountain, we propose to float our bark for a while on the lesser, but purer of the two; the rightful heir of Christian painting. It differs from its predecessor, not so much in motive and traditional guidance as in its superior exaltation, rising higher into the mysteries of eternal life, and penetrating deeper into the psychological secrets of human nature.

It divides itself into two branches: one ascetic, the other ecstatic; both mystic and differing as night from day: for the former is sad and wearisome, painful to contemplate and injurious to indulge in, finding its heaven by penance, in the wilderness, and all that makes life unjoyous to the healthy soul: whilst the other lifts man into immortality, and makes him coequal with angels. Each appeals to the inmost faculties; each threatens the sinner with unutterable woe; and each rejoices the believer with glimpses of unspeakable joy. Both concentrate their powers on a limited range of subjects, compensating for their lack of comprehensiveness by intensity of expression. The contrast be-

tween the stern, grave, passionless, painful, self-torturing devotion of the one, intense in will, cleaving to ugliness, dirt, and penance, pitiless in feeling, scorning its own humanity, canonizing its self-elected, repulsive, and attenuated martyrs, with their gloomy visions, gross trials of flesh, and terrific contests in solitude with Satan in person, and the ecstatic delight, celestial harmonies, and angel-filled trances of the other class, each transfusing its soul into its art, is indeed striking. But to properly appreciate it, we should see their works in those sacred localities for which they were created, and amid those associations that gave them religious and historical value. Isolated in museums and galleries, all this is lost and they are reduced to their mere technical or antiquarian interest.

We shall briefly notice the most prominent of their artists, beginning with Pietro di Lorenzetti (1270-1342), brother of Ambrogio. Strictly speaking, in style he belongs to the lyrical Giotteschi, but his peculiar feeling places him under the present head. Pietro, or Laurati which is his more common designation, was emphatically the painter of contemplative, ascetic life. He was not a monk, so far as is known, but he enters so completely into the feeling of the Fathers of the Desert, with such naïve details of their isolation, trials, and singular satisfactions, sympathizing so honestly in their exceptional lives, that one is tempted to view them with indulgence. Hermits and anchorites are his favorite themes, seen from the angelical side, to attain which condition of soul, through a painful regimen of fasting, prayer, penitence, self-denial, and solitude, so great a multitude in the early ages of the Church forsook the active world for the wilderness. Laurati represents their manner of life, with the legendary halo that encircled it, in a series of remarkable easel paintings, and in a grand fresco in the Campo

Santo of Pisa. He is one of the earliest masters who introduced landscape on a broad scale as the groundwork of his pictures. His scenes are on the banks of the Nile, which he makes to wind amid ranges of craggy, truncated mountains, guiltless of perspective, thickly sprinkled with hermits' cells, caves, and monasteries. The entire monastic life passes before us in panoramic review, natural things laden with allegorical meaning, its struggles with a niggard soil and fierce climate being symbolical of conflicts with still more obdurate passions. He introduces a great variety of plants and modes of industry; the brethren in study or contemplation; animals tame or ferocious, all subdued by the law of love to their service; in one group a venerable hermit Bacchus-like astride a leopard proud of his holy burden; lions humbly doing duty as horses; a bear dancing, taught by some cunning monk whose worldly reminiscences were strong upon him, and fearing for his own soul should he indulge his wanton desires, vicariously shifts the pleasure and the sin to his pet brute; souls in all manner of dire struggles with filthy devils; chastity warmly assaulted by feminine charms, whose modest garments fail to hide the claws of Satan, which will peep out beneath, —pity so few note them,—superior sanctity in man being represented by the nearest approach in general appearance and habits to the brutes with which they so affectionately consort: dirty, shaggy, and repulsive to the last degree; prevailing quietism; we industrial moderns would call it vagabondism: such is the general character of these paintings, into which Laurati also puts a multitude of the miraculous incidents recorded by the credulous biographers of Saints Jerome, Paul, Anthony, and other luminaries of asceticism.

In color these pictures are dark but not inharmonious; childish in the mode of composition, rude and artless in

execution, but with fine, firm, miniature finish, some grace and ease of outline, general truth of expression, and much freshness and life. Laurati did not confine himself wholly to this sort of composition. He had almost equal power with Fra Angelico over spiritualities. Witness what the materialist Vasari records of his frescoes at Arezzo, now gone. The most beautiful was the "Assumption," which for the spirit of the heads, the character of the drapery, the ecstatic joy of attending angels, as with celestial chorus they bore the Virgin triumphantly heavenward, was unexcelled, he says, by any production of that time. This we may credit upon the merits of his beautiful altar-piece in the Uffizi, a painting singularly celestial in its sentiment and clear blue tone, impressing the spectator as with rapturous music.

The repulsive extreme of asceticism was fully developed by Andrea del Castagno (1410-1480), of Florence. Like Giotto, his talents were first detected by his clever efforts with charcoal and rude instruments in drawing on walls and stones, animals and other objects. He was placed by Bernadetto de Medici under regular instruction, and he profited by it sufficiently to acquire no inconsiderable reputation, darkened however for all time by a fell temper, which finally prompted him to murder his friend and rival Domenico Veneziano, who having introduced into Florence the secret of painting in oil acquired thereby much profit and fame.\* Castagno perceiving this and desiring to monopolize the secret, ingratiated himself into his confidence by assum-

\* Oil painting was not new in Tuscany then, for there is a picture still preserved at Siena, painted in oil, signed Johannes Pauli, A. D. 1436. Gentile da Fabriano painted in this method considerably earlier. Indeed we have notice of oil as a vehicle as early as 1200. But its qualities were so imperfectly understood that it never became general in Europe until Van Eyck discovered its peculiar properties, and successfully applied them to painting.



ing to be a jovial fellow, accompanying Domenico, who was musical, in his amorous serenades at night, and with great duplicity so winning upon his unsuspecting nature that in return for his seeming good offices he instructed him in the coveted method. Whereupon Castagno, watching his opportunity, waylaid him one night on his return from visiting his mistress, and gave him a mortal blow, crushing in his chest with a heavy, leaden weight. Being disguised, Domenico failed to recognize his assassin, who hurried back to his chamber and went to drawing after his usual manner. The dying groans of Veneziano brought to his assistance some of the servants of the hospital of Sta. Maria Nuova. They gave the alarm, and among those who came running to the scene was Castagno. Seeing Domenico breathing his last, counterfeiting intense horror and surprise, he threw himself on the ground beside him, and taking him in his arms dolorously cried out "Oh! my brother! Alas! my brother!" and refused to be comforted, professing his desire to die with him. All which treachery he revealed long after upon his death-bed.

If ever the dark soul of a sinner gave its hue to art, it was by this villain. With considerable skill in design, strength of execution, fine finish, and general knowledge of his profession, there is a moral atmosphere about his painting, in general, that is absolutely repellent.

His dark, brown tones, sparse but emphatic use of gory red, dusky flesh tints, warmly colored draperies, and frequent choice of ascetic topics, indicate passion, melancholy, and a disturbed moral condition. It is true his best things have perished. But those remaining, however clever after his manner, are uniformly disagreeable. When but a boy he was wont to reply to criticism that vexed him with violent language and even blows. It enraged him to see



another preferred. He was powerfully made, and capable of profound dissimulation. Life always turned its dark side upon him. Nature wore a pall—her worst and gloomiest were ever uppermost. His portraits display the lurking evil of their sitters. Not one is more sinister than his own. Vasari insists that the one which he took of himself, now lost, looked like Judas Iscariot. Yet he affects religious subjects, but they are of penance and suffering. Expiation is his creed. His home, a gloomy, howling wilderness. The remorse and evil that infested his own soul he infuses into his St. Jeromes; despairing, attenuated, self-torturing, wild beings, undergoing physical privations, and gazing in utter wretchedness upon crucifixes, which look down reproachfully upon them. In all his creations of this character, however forcible the delineation of bodily suffering, it is the greater distress of soul that strikes the beholder and ranks him prominent among the ascetic artists. His peculiar temperament was fully appreciated in his own time. For in 1478 the magistrates of Florence commissioned him to paint all those who had taken part in the Pazzi plot, as traitors hung by their feet in the most distorted attitudes. This he did so satisfactorily to their revengeful spirit as to secure to himself ever after the sobriquet of “Andrea degl’ Impiccati,” — Andrew the Gibbeted, — which ominous nickname, considering his crime, although undetected, must have haunted his guilty footsteps like the dark shadow of an approaching Fate.

We cheerfully take leave of him to go to a group that at once welcomes us into the joys of the believer; artists whose attributes were peace, faith, and love. It may seem at first thought inappropriate to rank them under the generic head of individualism, particularly if contrasted

with the stronger personality, decided naturalism, and wider eclecticism of the main stream of the new development in painting. But although their song was sweeter, their types more ideal, and their topics deeper interwoven with the supernatural, yet not less than the others did they reveal themselves in a positiveness of character, specific inasmuch as it was opposed to the realism of their great rivals, and tuned to the loftiest spiritual elements of our being. Few only are gifted with the conditions of soul capable of realizing on earth the scenes of heaven. But to some is vouchsafed through prayer and meditation a divine illumination. To their inner sight is disclosed, invisible to common eyes, "the horses of fire and the chariots of fire"—the "heavens are opened" unto them and they see "His glory."

It is not without a certain hesitation and fear of misconception that one approaches those who stand thus directly in the presence of the Highest. Weak in all the world holds as strong, poor in its riches, covetous of none of its honors, ambitious of its uses only for good, self-interest and sense burned out of the heart by the power of holiness that descends from above as a dove, rapt, mystic, and forereaching into eternal life, knowing, through a surety and signs that come not of reason and are not amenable to the known laws of matter, that the divine wisdom "works in them mightily both to will and to do;" upheld amid vicissitudes and trials by an unquenchable religious instinct; loftier in their humility, stronger in their weakness, more potent on their thrones of grace than monarchs in their pride of state; working miracles of persuasion on stubborn, selfish minds, leading them captive by the intensity of their convictions and the beauty of their spiritual visions; all their energies directed to the one great end of

God's desire, the salvation of human souls, with a unity of power and a concentration of will that no temptation can turn aside ; transcending in virtue of their election by the Holy Spirit every obstacle of temporal circumstance ; content so that present sacrifice shall work out for themselves and others exceeding great joy hereafter ; counting stripes as gain and martyrdom as the Crown of success ; — we repeat, that it is not with common feeling and cold criticism we dare deal with souls like these.

Yet, without a clue to the mystery of their existence how can we understand them ? The ordinary processes of ratiocination do not serve. We must throw ourselves unreservedly into the guiding feeling of their lives. Not otherwise will the wisdom of science or the subtlety of logic disclose the secret. Spiritual exaltation, of this mighty force, has laws of its own, past finding out to the mass, but none the less cogent for their obtuseness. St. Paul felt, but could not convey by words, their truth. St. Francis of Assisi and other mystics of this stamp held constant intercourse with that "unrealized world" which is near to us all, surrounding those who feel it, according to the constitution of their souls, with either disquiet or repose. Call, if we will, the religious enthusiasm born thence fanaticism, yet it is no less a dominion, for good or evil, before which the world, true to its underlying, undying instincts, bows in fear or love. Setting aside, to those who insist, as blasphemous insanities, the miracles ascribed by monkish biographers to the canonized favorites of the Roman Church, there still remain to be accounted for, influence and deeds which have become historical ; whose effects not only largely solaced human misery, but changed the current of human affairs, and still partially control them. Let sceptics in the power of the supernatural ele-

ment to move and guide men explain how came the low-born, illiterate Catherine of Siena, without personal charms, prostrated by disease, backed by no gifts of any nature prized by the world, yet by sharply-toned, keen truths and exhortations in the ears of popes and princes, unpalatable at all times and ever dangerous to the utterer, — how came she to restore to Rome from Avignon the chair of St. Peter, when policy, interest, and right had each failed in turn to move Gregory XI.; to give peace to rival cities, which trained ambassadors had given up in despair; and to acquire an authority over rough, sensual, and wily natures for their welfare, which borders on the marvellous, unless it was by that inspiration, deep-seated in the everlasting elements of humanity, which when quickened by divine grace, strong in instinctive faith and earnest in eloquence, no matter how lowly the source, be it the man of sorrow or the bed-ridden woman, triumphs over all inferior motives and solves the profoundest doubts.\*

\* While deeply impressed with the spiritually heroic aspect of the characters of these and other enthusiasts, born of the Roman creed and exalted at their deaths, by the power they so diligently served when living, into saints, we are not unmindful of their weaknesses, bordering at times upon criminality or insanity. Indeed, whenever reason is systematically abased by the force of religious feeling, extremes of either quality must result. Therefore while we must reverence the good that had its origin in their religious exaltation, and admit its beneficence to the world at large, there is no need of surprise or incredulity in regard to facts which if viewed solely by themselves would justify the public in considering such exceptional beings as moral nuisances. St. Catherine in her zeal to relieve poverty gave away the property of others, and even proposed to denude herself utterly to clothe vagrant paupers. Personal cleanliness she considered a sin of vanity, and wept and prayed and did penance because her sister had once persuaded her to comb her hair. St. Francis stole to appease his unenlightened instincts of charity. His father, who was a sufferer in his merchandise, locked him up and flogged him severely, which suffering no doubt his misguided conscience looked upon in the light of great spiritual gain. His own townsmen for a while thought him a madman, and hooted and pelted him as one. He actually stript himself naked to clothe the poor. Once, because he had eaten of a chicken he had himself soundly flogged as a vile glutton. Among other insanities, he built a stable to resemble that in which Christ was

The artists whom we are now coming to not merely chose their themes chiefly from such sources, but partook themselves, more or less, of their character. But this exceptional condition of soul is not without its penalties and drawbacks. The mind is narrowed to a particular focus. In its eager pursuit of immortal things through expanded faith, it contracts its judgment, stultifies reason, and weakens its general energies and sympathies by overmuch concentration upon special aims. Home and hopes being removed above the plane of material existence, this life is viewed as an accident, a privation, a penance—sometimes assuming with nobler minds the elevation of a mission—from which there is abundant joy in quickly escaping, and from whose temptations and active duties contemplation and conventual imprisonment are the best screens. Consequently, while we find in artists of this quality a piercing insight and keen sensibility in relation to spiritual belongings, often revealing their visions in forms, colors, and creations that seem borrowed directly from heaven itself, there is a corresponding incapacity of expressing the coarser conditions of earth-life and of letting themselves down to our more sensuous standard of feeling. On this account their appreciative audience is smaller ; exacting for full delight a corresponding belief

born, with the ox, ass, and fodder, among which he lay, "bleating like a sheep, pronouncing the word Bethlehem, and licking his lips from very sweetness every time he uttered the name of Jesus." See *Fra Dolcini and his Times* by L. Mariotti (Gallenga) p. 46. The monks of St. Anthony were cunning enough to have their pigs considered as sacred "*taboo*," according to a like priestly custom among the pagans of Polynesia—which obtained for them the privilege of feeding everywhere at the expense of the public, with the penalties of sacrilege hanging over those who should molest them. Now it is evident that if such follies were the ordinary current of life of these saints and not the exceptional points of their characters, they would have no more been venerated than ordinary fools. But as they did largely influence human affairs, without the ordinary bases of position, knowledge, or wealth, we are reduced to account for it as in the text.



in the character of the future life, and the admission that even in the present, to the pure and humble, a partial revelation is sometimes vouchsafed of its bliss.

Prominent among the ecstatic visionists, though somewhat out of our locality, Bologna having been his residence, and in date and style of the Giottesque period, was Lippo Dalmasio, whose known works range from 1376 to 1410, soon after which period he died. With the exception of stories from the life of the prophet Elijah, painted on the walls of a chapel, by the orders of his superiors, he having joined the Carmelites, his uniform theme was the Virgin, on whose features he bestowed a thrilling sweetness. So impressive was this upon the imagination of Guido Reni that he used to contemplate these effigies in a species of ecstasy, affirming that they were the product of more than mortal skill, and adding what is now equally apparent, that no artist of his time had ever been able to attain to their unearthly purity and holiness of expression. This opinion was shared by several of the popes, one of whom, Clement VIII., "declared that he had never seen images more devout or that touched his heart nearer." \* But this marvelous success in rendering the highest idealism of the Madonna was grafted on his limited technical skill by his extraordinary, mystical devotion towards her. For he never painted the "Mother of God" without previous ecstatic communion with her image, as it appeared to his prayer illumined imagination, "fasting the previous evening, and receiving absolution and the bread of angels" (the Eucharist) "the morning after;" absolutely refusing to soil his hands with pecuniary gain, painting solely for religious edification, and giving away his pictures to those who accepted them in the same holy spirit in which he did them.

\* Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice*, vol. i. p. 33.



Coming down to a somewhat later period, with styles more in accordance with the improved design and æsthetic taste of their day, we come to the two most distinguished of this class of inspired artists, Fra Angelico, of Fiesole (1387-1455), and Sano di Pietro, of Siena (1406-1481). Of the private life of the latter nothing is recorded beyond the bare facts of his poverty, humility, conscientiousness, piety, and entire devotion to his art, which with him was synonymous with religion. His paintings are less numerous than those of the former, and indeed out of Siena they are comparatively unknown. Between the two artists there is so much sympathy that Sano has been called the Fra Angelico of the Sienese school. He is, however, more sensuous in coloring. Indeed his finest pieces remind one of a beautifully arranged bouquet. Beside the charm of their tints, they are pervaded with an aroma of holiness, exquisite touches of feeling, and profound sentiment. The "Coronation of the Virgin" is his favorite subject.\* But he delights also in Madonnas in Glory, and infant Christs, surrounded by the hosts of heaven, and sanctified men and women, crowned with bright garlands and uttering hosannas. The bliss and not the pangs of redemption is his chief inspiration. Yet an indefinable sadness lingers on the countenances of most of his figures, especially in their dark, lustrous, full, round eyes, as if their joy was tempered with pity for those who had not attained to their election, and was still burdened with responsibilities for sinning brethren. Fra Angelico invariably bestowed upon his personages delicate, soft blue, or mild gray orbs; so that by this distinction alone their works may always be discriminated. The folds of Sano's drapery are more broad, graceful, and sweeping. Angelico's incline to the narrow and tubular. Tenderness, deli-

\* Pl. G, fig. 20.









cacy, beauty, pure coloring, in simple masses without attempts at "morbidezza" but in harmony with the sentiment, ethereal lightness, and wonderful refinement, particularly in his women and angels, no attempt at portraiture, but characteristic, ideal expression, a direct transfer of mental images to his panel under the fervor of religious incitement, repeating himself constantly in the same poetical vein, a limited range of topics, a certain timidity or feebleness of design, especially if force or action be attempted, no variety of invention, but infinite grace and purity of motive and perfect sanctity throughout, in which even his animals and landscape participate, both of these somewhat improved upon the style of the Giotteschi, yet retaining much of their characteristics: such are the leading features of Sano's painting. In everything we trace an earnest, painstaking, contemplative, serene, and pious mind, shrinking from the roughnesses of outer life, and creating to itself a heaven of spiritual repose.

A picture which perfectly represents his best qualities is the "Story of the Magi," once a gradino to a large altarpiece.\* Sano, like Fra Angelico, was a miniaturist. Consequently his smaller figures are his best. The painting in question is executed with the utmost finish, in the best style of tempera, and the subject naïvely rendered in a panoramic manner, the different phases of the history being brought, by literal repetition of the figures, with the simplicity of a child's narration, directly before the spectator. The landscape is made up of broad, waving lines of hills, symmetrically grouped in rude perspective, crowned by distant castles and walled towns, and dotted sparsely with conventional trees and fruit-bearing shrubs. On the left, the dark, blue horizon indicates a clear, calm night. The

\* Pl. G, fig. 21, a group of.



three kings, picturesquely grouped, clad in costly robes delicately embroidered in gold, gaze intently at the miraculous star, which has just appeared to guide them to the holy babe. A little more to the right, the day growing apace, we behold them mounted on richly caparisoned horses, following a stony road, which winds among the hills that partly hide them from the view, and leads to Bethlehem. Camels carry their baggage, and a man with hounds in leash goes with them, but unlike Gentile da Fabriano and the sensuous purists, Sano is chary of accessories that have not a direct reference to the story. He concentrates the attention solely upon its proper incidents, as simply given as can be.

Having found the manger, from the star resting above it, the Magi dismount, and giving their horses in charge to their attendants, approach Mary and the lowly babe, to do them reverence. Tradition calls the eldest of the three kings Caspar of Tarsus, an old man with a venerable beard, whose gift is gold; the second, middle-aged, is Melchior of Arabia, who brings frankincense; the third, youthful and handsome, usually represented as a negro, is from Nubia, and he fetches myrrh. This group is beautifully and feelingly conceived; attractive by its harmony of bright, clear, simple colors, and winning from its earnest devotion and natural grace of sentiment, the very brutes so filled with the spirit of the scene that the expression of their features is a reflection of the human countenances about them. Fatigue, hunger, animal instinct of every kind, are absorbed in miraculous homage to the infant Deity. Mary presents Jesus to the kneeling kings. Sano makes her sitting upon the saddle of the ass on which she journeys, a touching suggestion of her poverty, the rack with the untouched food of the beasts on one side, and Jo-

seph standing behind, in prayerful rapture, contemplating the divine mystery.

On the other side is the full light of the Syrian day. The cortege, having fulfilled its pilgrimage, is now winding its way homeward over the hills. Note the intense, thoughtful emotion, the mingled wonder and worship, that light up the faces of the recent visitors of the holy family. All are spell-bound, and with reluctance leave the spot, their attendants, and one of the horses even, turning their heads for a last, intent look. Deer are in the distance. One lies quietly on the ground watching the train go by, while his mate, startled at the sight of the dogs, has got up prepared for flight. A lazy camel is quickening his pace, urged on by his driver. But like the similar scenes of Fra Angelico, there is neither weight nor force in the blows!

Sano's pictures, in his own day, were held as pictorial prayers. Upon the frame of one in the Sienese Academy there is an inscription to the effect that Domenico Franchesco had it made for the repose of the souls of his parents. It would be sacrilege upon all right feeling, therefore, to bring this class of pictures down to the material and technical or even the æsthetical standard of painting proper. Perfection in design, imitation of nature, and sensuous beauty were not their ends and aims. Did they realize their religious intent? Over a large class of spiritual-minded persons they certainly did; and even on ordinary minds, prone to externals, their influence was most salutary. Sensualists and sceptics acknowledged their purity and ecstatic exaltation, and were the better for being reminded by them of spiritual truth. Even to this day they fascinate souls. And we read that hard-headed Protestants, awakened by them to the better traits of Romanism, have gone over to

that creed, finding in their suggestiveness that spiritual elixir which every susceptible soul hungers and thirsts for.\*

Fra Angelico is the St. John of art. His head nestled in Jesus's bosom. All generations of men unite in calling him "Angel," — "Beato," the blessed, an artist saint, the highest type of the ecstatic purists; sanctified in every desire, as charitable as devout, as meek as holy, consecrating his genius solely to religion, and faithfully fulfilling the rule which Vasari applies to art, "that he who makes the things of Christ should always be with Christ."

The early circumstances of Giovanni, such was his Christian name, were comfortable if not affluent. He could have chosen an agreeable career or an ambitious one, with favorable beginnings. But his quiet, reflective disposition led him, "chiefly for the salvation of his soul," to join the Dominican monks. No brother more strictly, in spirit and letter, fulfilled his vows of chastity, fasting, obedience, prayer, and self-renunciation. "Never was he seen in anger with the brethren," says Vasari, and sensibly adds "which appears to me a thing most marvellous and all but incredible." His admonitions were simple, and always softened with a smile. The particulars of his early artistic training are very scanty, but he soon became so much in repute that every amateur was desirous of a painting by him. To every application his answer was, "Obtain the consent of the prior and I will do all I can to gratify you." The moneys received were given to the convent. He painted numerous pictures, easel and fresco, in Florence and its vicinity, Cortona, Perugia, Orvieto, and Rome, never signing nor dating them, holding his reputation as nothing, solicitous only to be accounted a good and faith-

\* See *Vie de Fra Angelico de Fiesole*, par E. Cartier. Paris, 1857.

ful servant in the sight of Heaven. It is said, he never began work without preparatory supplications to God and devout meditation over his themes, the composition of which once fixed in his imagination he refused to alter, believing the design to be inspired by the divine will. If we can credit Montalembert,\* he painted Christ and Mary only on his knees, and his crucifixes amid floods of tears. He was indeed impregnated with the "Word." Hence his mysticism was of the intensest, highest character, at times breaking out in pictorial strains that recall the beauty and sublimity of Israel's poets. Each stroke of his pencil was guided by ecstatic piety and a profound insight into the theological science of his sect. Yet he was neither bigot nor fanatic. His truly Christian virtue kept his heart clean and his head sound. He persistently refused ecclesiastical promotion, because he considered himself not qualified to govern and unworthy of distinction. In this he judged aright, as he was formed for faith and obedience and not for rule and direction. And by concentrating his powers upon painting, under the dictation of his spiritual faculties, he arrived at an excellence in his particular vein as yet unrivalled.

In awarding to the monk this lofty position, it is expedient not to overlook his defects. They are such as are incidental to an ascetic temperament and monastic isolation. But before touching upon them let us fully comprehend his actual ambition and special acquirements. Holiness and orthodoxy were his aspirations, and in them he was successful. In each emotion that imparts bliss to the believer, every tender joy and ecstatic thrill of salvation, the perfect repose of unquestioning faith, the rapture of glorified beings, the ineffable light of the "great white throne ;"

\* *Du Vandalisme*, p. 246.

in the "fine white linen" that "is the righteousness of saints," the "voice of harpers harping with their harps," the mighty array of heaven's virgins singing new songs; in the use of the "jasper and sardine stone," the emerald and rainbow effulgence, crowns of gold, and wreaths of fairest flowers; in visions of those who have "gotten the victory over the beast" and have "the seal of God in their foreheads," whose melodious hosannas and full-toned hallelujahs resound in everlasting chorus through the vaults of heaven; with every conceivable accessory having spiritual significance, of modest drapery, fine embroideries, rich though simple ornament, a multiplicity of eloquent detail and imaginative creations, Fra Angelico is most graphically fecund. Nor is he less remarkable in his hierarchal symbolism and the *meaning* of his colors; seraphic love burning in his bright, ethereal reds and the wisdom of the cherubim in his pure, celestial blues. In these respects and his mysticism generally he cleaves to Byzantine examples. The graceful naturalness of Simone Martini and the more profound motives of Taddeo Bartolo also had charms for him. Whilst in his draperies, exceptional dramatic action, occasional groupings, and, as with Sano, progressive disuse of gold backgrounds and other Giottesque technicalities, we perceive the influence of the contemporary naturalistic development, individualized by each in accordance with their mental tones and feeling. The superiority of Fra Angelico over all kindred artists is most apparent in his Madonnas and angels. They are more ethereal in color and spiritual in expression than those of Sano di Pietro, with a certain incorporeal lightness, as it were, which is beyond description. In the former, he realizes the perfect idea which St. Thomas expresses of her peculiar beauty, the sight of which purifies the senses in place of



exciting them. Purely ideal images are apt to become vague and insipid. But both these artists escape this. The latter, particularly, in his type of the Virgin, incarnates the very chastity and beauty of heaven. She is most lovely; pensive, impressed with a mysterious sense of her selection as the corporeal medium of bringing salvation down to man, meekly obedient to the Son, yet none the less the perfect mother, robed and adorned as only Fra Angelico knew how to picture the vision that was born from his imagination into the world of art.

His angels are correspondingly successful realizations. Young, virginal, celestial, conscious of perfect bliss, innocence, knowledge, and power, the messengers of divine love and will to man, heaven's courtiers and the friends of the redeemed, they are in conception equally among the best fruits of his ecstatic moments and the happiest efforts of his pencil.

The coloring of Fra Angelico corresponds to his themes. It avoids uncertain outline, confusion of tints, and every other sign of sensuous warmth or sensual passion. Of crystalline purity and virgin freshness, it is attractive as the rainbow itself. He diffuses a flood of light over his best pictures, which, as Lord Lindsay justly observes, being "pure and unmixed, gold, azure, red, yellow, blue, harmonize and blend like a rich burst of wind-music in a manner inconceivable in recital—distinct yet soft, as if the whole scene was mirrored in the sea of glass that burns before the throne."

The hues of the Tuscan purists resemble those of jewels, clear, sparkling, and distinctive.\* To get greater depth

\* It is well to note some of the restricted uses of color as symbols among the devotional painters, by which their taste was more or less fettered, and which in estimating their works in either an æsthetic or emblematic sense should not be overlooked.

White was the emblem of religious purity, joy, or life. The Saviour usu-



and richer gradation, the Venetians and those who practised their principles of coloring painted as if with fused gems. But what they gained in mellow warmth, they lost in purity. Their strength of color is more artificial, and inclines to the sensual, though they make it express whatever they like, depending for desired effects more upon its language than that of design. They mostly drew in color. The Tuscans loved the full brightness of day, with its clear speech and form-betraying power. But the Venetians veiled their beauties in a magic light, as if seen through some artificial medium or only in the golden and purple tints of a thinly-clouded setting sun. The key of the one was nature's simplest and serenest lights; that of the other, her most sensuous and occasional effects, pitched on a scale many degrees below the natural and hence full of power from its reserved strength and the extraordinary skill ac-

ally wears white after his Resurrection. On the judge it signifies integrity, on the rich humility, and on woman chastity. The Virgin wears white only in the Assumption. Her proper dress is a blue mantle with a star in front, long sleeves, red tunic, and head veiled.

Red or ruby signified fire, divine love, the creative power, and royalty.

White and red roses, as worn by Saints Cecilia and Dorothea, imply love and innocence or love and wisdom.

In a bad sense, red implied blood, war, hatred, and punishment. Red and black were the livery of hell and the devil, as we see now in our theatricals and masquerades.

Blue or the sapphire is heaven, truth, and fidelity. St. John the Evangelist wears a blue tunic and red mantle.

Yellow or gold was the symbol of the sun; goodness of God; marriage, faith, or fruitfulness. St. Peter wears a yellow mantle over a blue tunic. In a bad sense, it means inconstancy, jealousy, or deceit. A dirty yellow is the livery of Judas.

Green-emerald signifies hope, victory. Violet-amethyst, love, truth, passion, and suffering. Hence it was worn by martyrs. Mary Magdalen, the patron saint, wears a red robe; as a penitent, violet and blue; red and green with her signifies love and hope. The Virgin wears violet after the Crucifixion, and sometimes the Saviour after the Resurrection.

Gray is the hue of mourning, humility, and innocence accused. Black refers to darkness, mourning, wretchedness. White and black together, humility and purity of life. They are the colors of the Dominicans and Carmelites.

quired in creating an atmosphere all its own. Paul Veronese, however, loved intense, sparkling daylight. In its management, owing to the perfected technical knowledge of his day, he excels every one, and consummates by science what the purists suggested by feeling.\*

\* Fully to appreciate the decadence in color accompanying depraved moral sentiments as manifested in painting, and the absolute connection that exists between purity of life and beauty of expression in this respect, one must attentively compare the styles respectively of the purists and sensualists, discriminating the exact influence on either of scientific knowledge and intellectual guidance. The tones Christian sentiment delights in we have already seen. Turn now to the lustful suggestions, the sombre, feeble, or tobacco-juice tints, the dull browns, the dry reds, and the confused and joyless hues, which obtain with so few exceptions among the artists in the ratio of their recession from noble sentiment and spiritual feeling, and we must fain acknowledge that, setting aside skill of design which is purely an intellectual acquirement, there is a similar intimate relation between the use of color and moral instincts, as between the choice of subjects and character of design. Trace the lives of the most prominent examples and we shall find in them full warrant for the repulsive aspect of their paintings. In the seventeenth century, particularly with the Neapolitans, whose school was the climax of this quality in Italian art, assassinations, treacheries, and brutalities were common. They were the bandits of painting, and their colors, subjects, and general treatment are gloomy and ruffian-like, dwelling with delighted emphasis upon the physically painful or horrible. Michel Angelo Caravaggio killed one of his friends in a scandalous quarrel. He afterwards fought and wounded a nobleman at Malta, fled to Naples, and there again fighting with some military men, was wounded and obliged to fly towards Rome, dying on his way of a brain fever in his fortieth year. With Ribera, Corenzio, and Caracciola, blood was as water. Their violence, accompanied by murder, towards Guido, Domenichino, and Annibale Carracci, is described in Lady Morgan's *Life of Salvatore Rosa*, p. 58. At this epoch the French, Flemish, and Dutch artists were accustomed to assemble in Rome, whenever money was plenty with them, and a countryman had newly arrived, to a scene of debauchery which often lasted twenty-four hours, the wine being brought to their table in hogsheads. This coarse brawl was termed the "baptism." Italians, in whose memories were rife the intellectual repasts of the times of Raphael, when each of the members of a festive society was obliged to bring to the feast an artistically concocted dish of his own, fancifully, architecturally, or grotesquely got up, and fined if it so happened that it did not prove both original and unique, were loud in their denunciations of the vulgarity and low choice of subjects of their northern rivals, and were accustomed to say of them "they may amuse the people, but they can never touch souls elevated by one noble idea." Their own immorality was of a more refined character, and chiefly in the way of gallantry. Both parties, in their deportment and art, present a strikingly unfavorable contrast to

Fra Angelico's pictures are of unequal merit. His best, among which are the "Last Judgment," in the Florentine Academy, and the Reliquaries in the Sacristy of Sta. Maria Novella, seem as if done by angels. Others are feeble, ill drawn, and harshly tinted, especially some of the series of the "Life of Christ;" faults, however, which some critics are disposed to attribute to his brother Benedetto. His Satan is the impersonification of Dante's, and his devils are as ugly as need be. But the types of such creations he had all about him from the pencils of other artists, while his celestial images were wholly the reflection of his own heaven-piercing vision. His power of damnation is very weak; horror is more in looks than action. As his loving nature would not permit him to thoroughly "damn" any one, although his creed necessitated it, so there is not, as with other depicitors of this terrible spectacle, any individuality of suffering. Popes, nuns, and monks are sent to hell by him as types of classes of sinners. He loathed animal expression in any shape, and he was always as unsuccessful in rendering it as he was happy in imparting to the saved and their guardian angels the joyful emotions which may be supposed to light up the countenances of those who have won Paradise. Thus intent upon the features, he frequently neglects extremities, which are treated at times with an almost Byzantine stiffness. In attitudes denoting firm action he was not more successful. Being a miniaturist, his

their brethren generally of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Even where piety was the prevailing feeling, as in Carlo Dolce, who dedicated his pencil to the Virgin, but whose image he found in Maria Madelina Baldinucci, painting only sacred subjects, it degenerated into morbid asceticism. His pictures were vapid, flashy, or lugubriously sentimental, for he was the victim of a pertinacious melancholy. At his wedding, being missed, he was found in a chapel prostrate before a crucifix. Those who, despising the earlier, find satisfaction solely in this later art, would do well to ask themselves why.

taste and practice are chiefly and most happily directed to small figures. He is a progressive artist, and his works evince careful study as well as profound feeling ; at times, dramatic conception and beautiful invention ; so that, had his inspiration been derived from the active world instead of confined within a cloister, there is reason to believe he might have won great eminence, even in the school of Masaccio. Imitating the practice of the naturalists, he introduced into his later compositions, such as the fresco of the "Life of Christ" in the Vatican, portraits of eminent public men of the time. Nicholas V., the Emperor Frederic, and Ferdinand of Aragon appear in the society of the holy men of old. In his own spiritual field he attains wonderful effects of light and color, especially in his series of frescoes in the cells of the convent of San Marco, evincing as they do a most subtle discrimination in the adaptation of his vehicles to the proprieties of his subjects, which effects, whether they were felt out or were the result of scientific discovery no one can now decide, though certain it is he has never been excelled in their peculiar management. To find a corresponding value in the treatment of lights, especially to his "Coronation of the Virgin" and the "Marys at the Sepulchre," we must go forward a century to the luminous qualities of the great Venetians, making due allowance for the greater brilliancy of oils and their more manageable qualities. These frescoes are miracles of artistic treatment. Under the most difficult conditions his tints interblend into rainbow delicacy and etherealness, suffusing his figures with the glow of Paradise, while from them emanates a particular effulgence, as if their souls, bathed in celestial ether, glowed through their bodies. Women, angels, Christ, and the crowned Queen of heaven, all according to their degrees of glory, the distinction between

earthly and heavenly atmosphere being wonderfully managed, are harmonized by the monk's magic marriage of matter and spirit into a unity of the highest qualities of art.

We cannot, however, agree with his Italian biographer, Father Marchese, himself a learned brother of San Marco, although sustained by the weight of Professor Rosini's opinion, in declaring Fra Angelico's frescoes in the Vatican, done in 1452, just before his death, to be in his best manner, and capable of disputing the palm of excellence with the best works of the century. This is exaggeration. He was not at home in historical composition, because he never did forsake the contemplative for active life, or give himself unreservedly up to studies from nature. In the degree that he attempted it, he gave promise of qualities which, had he been so inclined, might have developed into rivalry with those of the naturalistic masters of his time. Perhaps no one of his compositions so well suggests this latent power in him as his fresco of the "Adoration of the Magi," in San Marco. In grouping and movement it is highly dramatic, in accordance with the probabilities of the scene, and freer from mysticism than any other of his elaborated compositions.

The artist passed as quietly on to the other life as he had lived in this, departing from Rome, which with Orvieto shares his latest works, and still retains his modest tombstone. Few seek it in its secluded nook in the church of Sta. Maria sopra Minerva, amid the overwhelming associations of the Cæsars, and the more seductive worldly art of the eternal city. Benedetto, his brother, labored with him, but was weak and mannered, though possessing much talent as a miniaturist. Among the comparatively few whose styles were formed in his school, were Zanobi



Strozzi, Machiavelli, and Michelino, whose full-length portrait of Dante still retains its place in the Duomo of Florence. His principal pupil was Benozzo Gozzoli. His proclivities, however, soon ran somewhat in another direction, and he formed an independent manner, which will be described in its place.

Among the Sienese whose style and feeling partake more closely of ecstatic than of naturalistic art there are three painters who need mention. One of these is Francesco Giorgio di Martini. He died in 1470, and was more distinguished as an architect and sculptor than as a painter. But he displayed genuine religious feeling, love of nature, a lavish delight in architectural ornamentation, and the scientific artifices of perspective.

Cristofano di Francesco, surnamed Sassetta, who flourished about 1450, is another. He was mystical, excellent in allegory, and displayed sincere feeling in painting. With much refinement of thought and style, fine finish, and not a little dramatic conception, he claims our regard, if from no other source than for the little picture,\* which tradition considers as his, of "St. Anthony in the Desert tempted of the Devil." In this simple and naïve composition, Satan has taken the form of a modest, demure, and bewitching damsel, and introduced himself to the acquaintance of the woman-fearing hermit. He sees not, though the spectator does, the diabolic wings which issue from her back, claw-looking and fiery. She folds her arms serenely over her breast, and tries to overpower his senses with sexual incitement. Mark her erect, lithe, graceful figure, virgin-like in pose and drapery, yet tempting by its betrayal of the lines of her form. Better still is the sinister expression of the fair, blonde face. Beëlzebub's artifice is here most

\* See No. 47 of Descriptive Catalogue in the Appendix.



transparent, where he most wishes to hide it. St. Anthony recoils in instinctive horror, with a relaxation of muscular fibre that betrays the intensity of his fright. The contrasted action of these two figures is a poem in itself. There is nothing more in the picture except the desolate hut of the anchorite, and a barren landscape, with a background of a wilderness of forests and hills, about which the atmosphere seems enchanted, because, as if with the instinct of coming evil, the very birds are flying wildly about, amid those weird bars of lurid light which mark the horizon. There is a glamour in this little picture, and an originality and perfectness of thought, so far as the motive goes, which, in our view, marks it as one of the most striking and interesting of the ascetic compositions of any epoch.

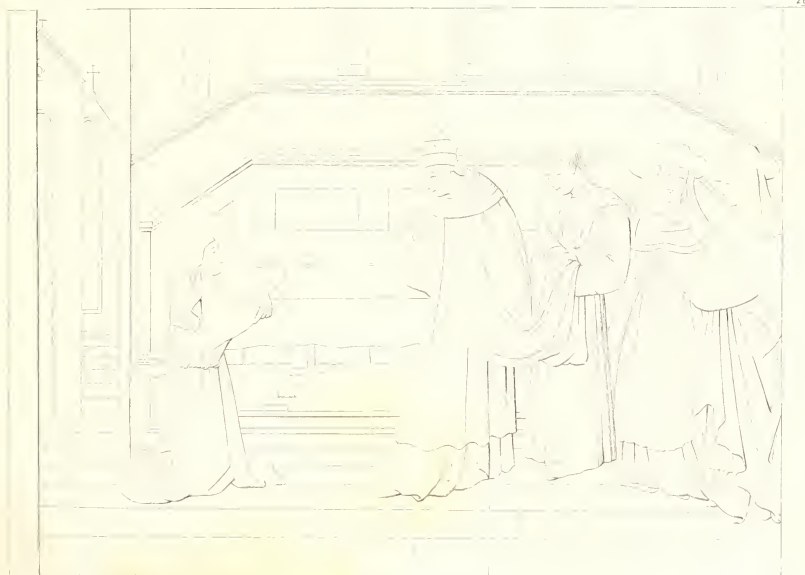
Giovanni di Paolo's (1428-1462) works have made him much more widely known. In his treatment of light and color he aims at the key of Paul Veronese. For his time he is wonderfully brilliant, firm, and natural; in motive and feeling inclining to Fra Angelico; damming with equal reluctance, and particularly touching in his individual recognitions among the crowd of the saved. These qualities are noticeable in his "Last Judgment," dated 1453, now in the Academy at Siena, and which being subsequent to similar compositions of the "Beato," may have been influenced by them. He introduces, however, some effective touches quite his own, such as Mary Magdalene sorrowing over the lost at the feet of Christ, before whom the Virgin *kneels* in a mournfully hopeless appeal for further probation of lost souls; the action being instinctive, while the justice of the irrevocable sentence is legible on her features. The contrast of the pitying women with the stern Judge is very beautiful; as is his Paradise, with its delightful flowers and welcoming angelic host.







*School of Siena - 1370*



*Giovanni di Paolo, Siena 1431-1462*

*Tin. Stanghi che inc*



The soft, mystic melodies of the Sieneſe, and their ſimple, earneſt, and tender devotion, tempt one ſtrongly to linger amongſt them, for their ſtrains at once ſoothe and inſpire. But other and greater claims await us. Let us bid adieu to ecſtatic art with a beautiful ſonnet, embodying the devout loyalty of the Sieneſe chivalry to the divine lady, to whom, two centuries before, in its peril from Florentine foes, it had formally gifted the wolf-bannered city. It was found inſcribed beneath Sano di Pietro's freſco of the "Coronation of the Virgin," over the Roman gate. The tranſlation is by Lord Lindsay, the original from Dellavalle.\*

"Queſt' alma glorioſa Vergine pura,  
 Figliuola del ſuo figlio, ſpoſa e madre,  
 Perchè l' Eterno Padre  
 La trovò umil più ch' atra perſona,  
 Del Univerſo qui le da corona !  
 Vergine Madre del Eterne Dio,  
 Dalle chui ſante mani coronatè  
 Sieti raccomandata  
 La devota e fedel città di Siena,  
 Come 'u te ſpera : Ave di gratia plena."

"Gracious and glorious, lo ! the Virgin pure,  
 Daughter, and Spouſe, and Mother of her Son ;  
 Whom — for the Eternal Father found her meek  
 And humble more than others in his ſight —  
 He crowneth here Queen of the Univerſe !  
 — Virginal Mother of the Eternal God,  
 Crowned by the Holieſt ! oh, entreated be  
 For thy Siena, loyal and devout !  
 She truſts in thee — Mother of Mercy, hail !"

\* *L. Sanesi*, vol. ii. p. 230.



## CHAPTER IX.

The New Phase of Painting. Causes and Character. Naturalism. The several Functions of the Progressive Painters. Sculpture and Architecture of this Period. Masolino da Panicale, 1403-1440, the Forerunner. Dello, the "Casone" Artist. New Motives, Subjects, and Styles. Paolo Uccello, 1396-1479, the Enthusiast. Masaccio, 1402-1443, the Teacher. The Frescoes of the Carmine. Filippo Lippi, 1412-1469, the Scapegrace. Botticelli, 1457-1515, the Improvident. Piero della Francesca, 1400-1494; Luca Signorelli, 1441-1524; Antonio, 1433-1493, and Pietro Pollajuolo, 1443-1496; Verrocchio, 1432-1488, the Scientists. Signorelli's Frescoes at Orvieto. German Tribute to them. Domenico Bartolo, 1438; Matteo da Siena, 1470; Baldovinetti, 1425-1499; Pesello, 1380-1457; Pesellino, 1426-1457, School Artists. Cosimo Rosselli, 1439-1506. Piero di Cosimo, 1441-1521, the Whimsical. Triumph of Death. Eccentricities of his Genius. Filippino, 1460-1505, the Amiable. Innovations and Incongruities. Domenico Ghirlandajo, 1449-1498, the Ambitious. His Greatness and Naturalness. The Nobility of his Waiting-maids and Angels. His Portraiture. Minardi, his Pupil. San Gimignano, a living Type of a Mediæval Town.

THE phase of painting upon which we are now about to enter had its rise in aroused individualism, was eclectic in principle, and based its choice directly upon humanity itself, in distinction from the preceding, whose chief aim was, as we have seen, spiritual exaltation. There was, however, much kindred aspiration in the present. It gave rise to a class of artists in greater or less degree actuated by similar motives, giving them expression by means of improved technical treatment, going to religion for their topics, and to some extent even influenced by Byzantine compositions. But the theological element and religious control in art was gradually losing its hold upon the times. Devotional paintings continued to be executed in great numbers, be-

cause they were considered as a necessity of religion. But the lofty symbolism, deep mysticism, and pure idealism, to which we must add circumscribed thought and taste, that had characterized the strictly religious art, although continuing to exist in their best degrees in the painters described in the preceding chapter, had now to encounter antagonistic influences which ultimately overthrew them.

There were many causes for this. Long-continued ecstasy exhausts our feeble powers, because it demands a tone of feeling, an intellectual insight, and range of sympathies above the common and visible. So, excessive allegory and involved symbolism weary the mind from their too exclusive appeal to reason. Being abnormal, the reaction is so much the stronger. For twelve centuries art had been either the slave or agent of religion, without an actual, independent existence, except as individual genius gave to it transiently a broader and freer significance. But the wheel of mind, though it may turn slowly, turns surely. Its revolution brings change, at first healthful and full of promise; then come excess and decay, which prepare the intellectual soil for new crops of ideas. These may or may not be superior to their predecessors, but they are inevitable. And a succession of such harvests results somehow or other in Progress.

This has been particularly true of art. Sensuous beauty in the Greek overthrew the dogmatic rigidity of Egyptian forms. In turn that gave way to another dogmatism; that of Christianity, which developed spiritual types of beauty. These, in time, provoked the reaction which furnishes the groundwork of our present analysis. But it is necessary to premise, that while in all great mental changes we can trace the movement and detect the propelling force, we can no more ascertain the exact lines of demarcation,

and prescribe where gradation stops and variation begins, than we can measure the mountain-wave or weigh the wind that urges it onward. Hence it will be noticed that much of the passing was interwoven with the coming development, cropping out here and there, and merging so naturally and gradually into the newer phase of painting, that while conscious of change we perceive no aspect of violent revolution.

The Greeks and Italians, kindred and mixed races, have invariably manifested a preference for the higher motives and nobler forms. Their perpetual theme has been the human soul, and their constant model the human figure. Both ancients and moderns constantly sought to elevate the spheres of action and feeling into the unseen world. Hence the lofty idealism of their best art. Nature, apart from humanity, has never been to either a particular inspiration. Domestic, common, or low life, and *genre* subjects, such as the northern schools delight in, gave them small pleasure. Their artistic ambition, like their imagination, has ever been lofty. And when they forsook spirituality for naturalism, they still clung to the human form and mind as their chief elements of inspiration. Unlike the English, they never developed landscape art except as an accessory, although in the hands of Titian and Correggio it first assumed a beauty, breadth, and dignity, which, as it were, created for the landscape an independent existence, evincing in them, had they been content to have bestowed their full powers upon that branch of painting, a capacity to have carried it to a degree of excellence equally as remarkable as that which they attained in the treatment of human expression.

The broader charter of freedom now gifted to art differed from its Giottesque predecessor in several points.

That admitted progress, but solely under religious control. Art could not, therefore, be wholly independent in development until the absolute *choice* of topics and entire *liberty* of method were permitted to it. These prerogatives it had now won.\* From that period art was understood and cultivated from a wider range of motives and greater latitude of taste, continuing to administer to religion, but by degrees varying her expression, till at last she gave vent to every thought and impulse of humanity. And in process of time, descending from her highest function, to preach, she was content in turn to teach, to illustrate, to decorate, to amuse, and, alas ! in the fulness of decadence, to seduce ; forsaking her spiritual God for the idols of the senses.

But the transition to the abomination of degradation was not immediate. Before sinking into the mire, in coming down from its heavenward elevation, for a while we tread firmly and elastically the joyous, varied, substantial earth, with its wondrous elements of lofty resolve and noble action. Civilization, with its intense realism, becomes the popular theme.

What is naturalism ? Art can go to two sources only for models. First, the imagination, out of which she cre-

\* We say won, though at times the Church asserted her right of dictation when it suspected covert heresy or indelicate license in pictorial expression. A devotional picture painted by Sandro Botticelli was ultimately condemned by the censors of the Inquisition, covered up, and the chapel in which it hung interdicted, because they thought they detected a sort of modelling in the draped bosoms of the angels indicative of erroneous belief or a desire on the part of the painter to represent them as females. Timoteo della Vite likewise incurred the rigid scrutiny of the Holy Office for having given an unorthodox representation of the Trinity, and for tinting the snowy plumage of the dove (the Holy Spirit) of the Annunciation of a ruddy hue, which was considered as a stain upon the immaculate conception. But in Italy this kind of censorship came into vogue somewhat late, and exercised no puerile control over art as in Spain. The Church did right to prevent the desecration of holy symbols, but it certainly, in the fifteenth century, did not forcibly interfere with the æsthetic freedom of painting, to the detriment of good taste or artistic truth.

ates forms corresponding to her ideas, having of necessity some likeness though not an absolute resemblance to visible types. Secondly, to Nature direct, as man, animal, vegetable, mineral, water, or atmosphere. Aspiring to represent them, she must copy or imitate. Hence, in using that term, it applies to that art which goes to the natural world for motives, laws, and teachings; analyzing and studying its manifold conditions, to reincorporate them into plastic or pictorial expression.

Hence scientific progress. The idealism of the masters now under review, unlike the classical, is their exceptional phase. Their invention delights more in reproduction than re-creation; matter-of-fact truth and positive character being preferred to the more subtle truths of ideal beauty and spiritual sentiment.

Naturalism being installed as the basis of the fresh progress, individualism became its pilot. Each artist allowed his rationalistic, sensuous, or moral proclivities free play, according as either one predominated, earnest in whatever he undertook, and prone to scientific practice and experiment. The fifteenth century in Italy was one of intense intellectual activity. Society then was undergoing its Epic phase; solving by the vicissitudes of experience many important problems. Its artistic and intellectual progress in extent and rapidity may be compared to the material expansion and universal activity of America in the nineteenth century. Nothing was stationary that thought or ambition could agitate. Good and evil were in fierce struggle for supremacy. Art, religion, and politics alike shared in the alternate successes of the noble or selfish faculties. Painting, accordingly, partook of the moral vibrations of the times, whilst its knowledge was steadily increasing under the accumulating action of original thought and ex-



periment. Gentile da Fabriano led the way to Venetian coloring, and became in it a knightly romancer; Paolo Uccello and Piero della Francesca made perspective their specialty; the Pollajuoli, anatomy; Luca Signorelli was enamored of severe forms and powerful action; Dello Delli cultivated the decorative and historical; Squarcione, of Padua, revived the rules of classical art; Fra Filippo was the first technical Christian artist in whose character and works sensual and material expression are prominently found; and Benozzo Gozzoli was captivated by the joyous and beautiful of the natural world. Out of such materials was constituted this great epoch of naturalistic progress, which culminated in sensuous color in Correggio and Titian; in form and grace in Raphael; in grandeur in Michel Angelo; and in intellectual eminence and universal power in Leonardo da Vinci.

Sculpture, the twin in progress with painting, and frequently practised by the same artist, continued to be intimately connected with it, in taste and feeling. Architecture also shared in their common inspiration. Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446), was the first to study perspective after a scientific method, which he taught to Masaccio. Gothic forms were supplanted by the semi-classical arch and dome, the precursors of the Renaissance style. Donatello (1383-1466), the Robbia family, of whom Luca (1400-1481) was the chief, and their disciples gave to sculpture the contemplative, spiritual character of the Fra Angelico school of painting. From Lorenzo Ghiberti (1381-1455) and his succession it derived the opposite impulse; eclectic, dramatic, and naturalistic, tinged at first with the Byzantine element, but soon freeing itself from that, it arrived at the same liberty of choice and expression which had begun to characterize the kindred branch of



painting. The great error of the Ghiberti school was in its burdening its backgrounds with a multiplicity of details not suited to its vehicles of expression, and attempting in marble, wood, or bronze, and even the precious metals, impossibilities of aërial perspective.

Masolino da Panicale (1403–1440), of Florence, bears towards Masaccio the same relation as the forerunner of a new movement that Cimabue did to Giotto. Here, however, the resemblance ceases. The old painter was grand and solemn — the new, natural and graceful. He combined delicacy of coloring and sentiment, acquired from Starnina, reminding one of Fra Angelico, with the closer observation of nature, the improved design and relief of his teacher, Ghiberti, warmer flesh tints and nicer gradations of light and shade, ease of movement and graceful naturalness, and a taste for the landscape, but in a rudimentary degree, that distinguished his co-worker, Masaccio. He would have stood in more prominent relief among the great painters, — for the advances he made entitle him to real consideration, — had not the fame of Masaccio so much eclipsed his. He was cut off in mid-career from excessive application to his profession. Beside his well-known frescoes in the Carmine, which in general character and execution harmonize so well with those of Masaccio that it is only recently that popular criticism has succeeded in discriminating between their styles, others by him have recently been discovered in the college church of Castiglione d' Olona, near Milan.

There were also two contemporaries of Masolino, both progressive artists of fertile invention and ingenuity, who deserve being held in remembrance on particular grounds. One was Dello, a Florentine, also a sculptor, born in the latter part of the fourteenth century, and alive in 1455. He

was among the first to pay attention to the nude and to muscular action, but now chiefly recommends himself by his numerous decorative paintings, historical, allegorical, classical, and religious, upon the richly carved or gilded bridal-chests and the waiters on which were borne the valuable gifts on the occasion of marriages or births, so fashionable in this century. The best artists did not disdain this sort of work. Although partaking of the character of furniture, it is precious for its beautiful and spirited sculpture, inlaid woods and stones, gilding, and above all for the quality of its paintings, to which the former served merely as a rich framing. The Greek and Latin poets, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, the novels of the day, fanciful allegories, troubadour adventures, family incidents, festivals, solemnities, fightings, and tournaments, the principal personages and those who ordered the paintings, the latter being distinguished by their heraldic devices, formed the usual topics. These pictures are much sought for, not only for their intrinsic value, but as illustrating in a graphic and picturesque manner the costumes and habits of the age; its domestic and public architecture; its in-door and out-door existence; and for their gradual development of the landscape and animal life, in painting; its hunting scenes, sea-fights, quaint fancies, and naïve compositions; in fine for the panoramic view they give us of the pleasures, pursuits, and tastes; the intellectual character, and the mode of interpreting the past of æsthetic Italy, in the fifteenth century. Their varied, secular themes were a welcome foil and relief to the monotony and asceticism of purely religious art; as grateful to the student in their spirited, historical picturesqueness after the lapse of three hundred years, beside their archaic value, as they were popular in their pristine beauty among the wealthy and noble families

that bespoke them. Dello is so connected with this branch of painting that "*casone*," as these chests are called, of any merit, even in Florence, are indiscriminately attributed to him, although several artists of greater eminence likewise adorned them. His coloring is strong and not inharmonious, with a rich display of accessories, much action, and a keen eye for the common and external. The green cloisters of Sta. Maria Novella, so called from the colors of the earth he used, painted in *chiaroscuro*, were partly done by him, though they by no means show his best work, which was on a smaller scale. He also worked for a number of years in Spain, where he acquired wealth and reputation.

The other contemporary of Masolino and fellow-citizen of Dello was Paolo Ucello (1396–1479). Industrious and enthusiastic, his art was everything to him. His chief delight was in the practice and investigation of perspective, consuming upon it so much time, attempting so many impossibilities, and displaying such extraordinary caprices, as to draw forth from his friend Donatello the expostulatory exclamation, "Ah! Paolo, this perspective of yours makes you leave the certain for the uncertain." It certainly did in his finances, for, absorbed in his studies and painting with such earnestness as to forget his pressing material necessities, despite his real talents, poverty was always at his door. But not even want, nor the pathetic reproaches of his half-starved wife, who waited silent and alone while he sat up entire nights absorbed in his favorite pursuit, could induce him to forego his experiments. Each time that she came beseeching him to leave his pencils and go to bed, he would reply "Oh! my dear, if you only knew how beautiful a thing perspective is!" leaving her to take such comfort out of her bootless errand as she best might.

Smile we may at the fanaticism of the zealous old painter and pity his contempt of self-indulgence in the pursuit of artistic truth. But out of such devotion sprung that old art-mastery which so delights and instructs us. In Paolo's frescoes at Sta. Maria Novella, representing the Creation and the Deluge, we perceive, as compared with previous paintings, that his vagaries in perspective were not without some truth, and that he has great vigor, naturalness, a vivid conception of his subject, and a singular fondness of details, crowding his compositions with figures, highly dramatic and yet varied in action. Nor is he destitute of a certain humorous pathos. Of such a character is the figure hanging on with his fingers and toes to the sides of the ark, in a most hopeless and desperate attitude. Also the man squatting low in a tub for fear of upsetting it, and floating triumphantly along-side of the huge vessel, evidently flattering himself that *his* ark may also weather the flood. Then, too, the figure of the naked man buoyed up on a treacherous cask, which threatens momentarily to unseat him. One drowning wretch clings with convulsive grasp to the feet of Noah, who calmly reproves his futile hope of escape. Raphael in his "Bible Stories" in the Vatican, did not disdain to borrow from quaint old Paolo. How naturally horrible the combat between the man on horseback, himself and beast struggling to escape the engulfing tide, and that despairing assailant who is so eager to dispossess him of his precarious seat! Corpses floating by, blue and swollen, vultures preying upon them; beautiful traits of maternal instinct or filial devotion; fury, terror, self-sacrifice, and selfish struggle; death come and death coming; a picturesque intermingling of the events and emotions conceivable on a drowning world: all this is admirably depicted. We

love him, dear old painter ! His animals are vigorous and real, his action so earnest and graceful, at times quite Raphaellesque ; he has such an observant eye and warm sympathy for the outer world ; then, too, his silent “ Natty-Bumpo ” chuckle at it,—for is he not independent of it ! his palpable delight, call it childish it is so enjoyable, in the introduction of varied machines, scaffoldings, and superabundant architecture that he may display his freaks of perspective and find an excuse for his dearly beloved geometrical lines ; his sympathy for color and pleasure in richness of apparel and chivalresque scenes, brave adventure, and noble doing ; love of “ *casone* ” because he can people them with the poems of his imagination, that world of which in his family he was the sole occupant ; a queer and captivating medley and wonderful variety of costumes, personages, gods and heroes, lovely women and high-born men, the past and present confusedly intermingled, each detail elaborated with wonderful power of industry, fancy, and variety ; and last, though not least, his perfect sincerity and absorption of self in his work,—all this makes Ucello—and that word reminds us that he was so called because among his many loves he loved birds dearest of all,—all this, we repeat, makes him vastly interesting.

The improvements based upon more varied and natural motives which the foregoing artists aimed at were successfully reached by one, whose best works, viewed by themselves, startle as by a sudden revelation ; but if we examine his growth, we shall perceive that this noonday brightness was ushered in by gentle gradations of light. Indeed, no truths of art, any more than those of science or religion, spring Minerva-like, fully armed and grown, into the world. Wisdom may thus exist in the hidden spheres, but not for mortal eyes. So although Masaccio in those

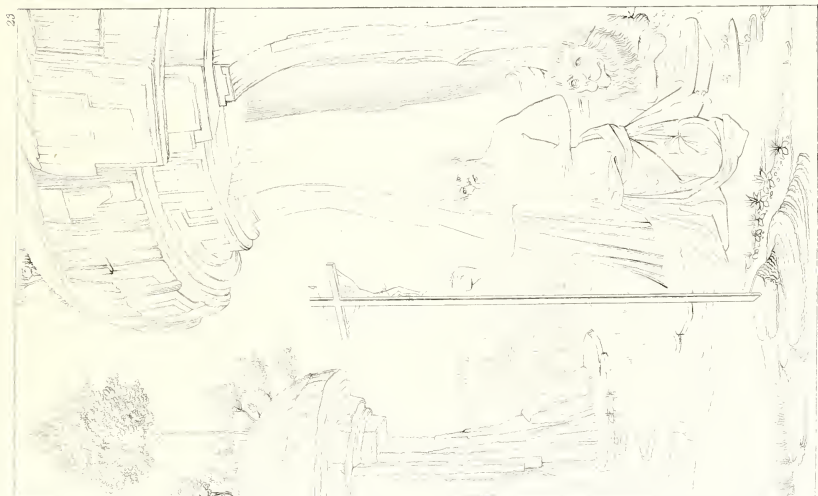




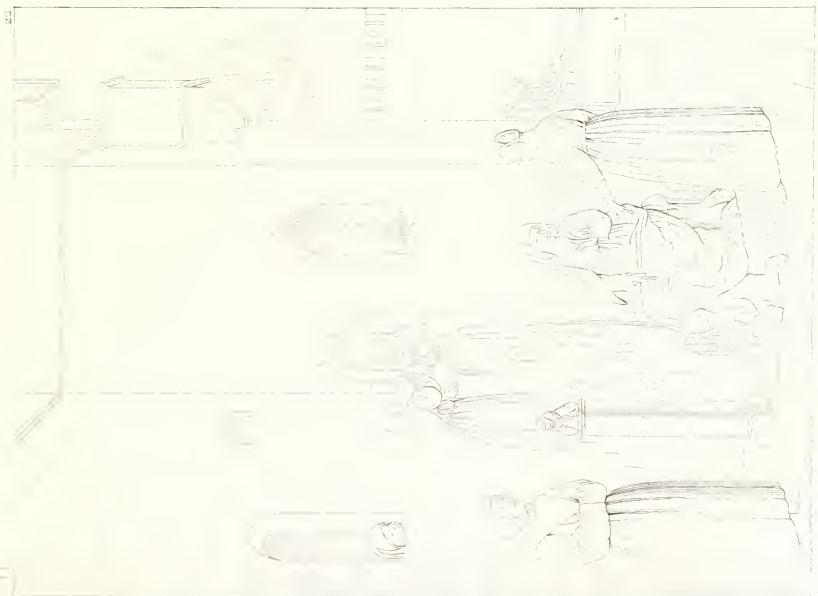




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works which constitute his real fame, wonderfully surpasses his contemporaries, looming up with greater effect from direct contrast with the Giottesque art that still flourished around him, yet his earlier progress was not a little influenced by the religious masters. This is perceptible in the frescoes, much injured by repainting, in St. Clemente at Rome, and which also in their transition manner recall Masolino.

Masaccio was needed at this juncture by painting, just as Giotto had been nearly a century and a half before, to prove its capacity in untried motives and design. He was born in 1402 at the castle of San Giovanni in the Valdarno near Florence. As soon as he had acquired his art, he rose to an original manner, leaving far in the shade all his predecessors. He excelled in harmonious and correct delineation of forms and proportions, strength of relief, truth of modelling, gradations of color and skill in *chiaroscuro*, mingling outline imperceptibly into distance, and other technical subtleties, now the alphabet of art, but then appearing to critics little short of miraculous in their effects; all of which he wrested from nature by direct observation and study. This is indeed the key to the success of his entire school. They no longer indulged in one conventional ideal, or sought their chief inspiration from supersensuous forms and exalted religious motives, but preferred to imitate the every-day facts and appearances of nature. As she looked so sought they to render her, holding up the mirror to her varied aspects; and when aspiring to the supernatural, they sought to confine its spirit in forms whose models walked the earth.

Unlike the Greeks, Masaccio and his school adopted no lofty ideal of sensuous beauty as a conventional standard, making nature conform to its laws, and regulating thereby

their compositions, for they were satisfied with the world about them as a perpetual inspiration. They drew the crowd, painted features, portrayed individuality and natural phenomena just as the panorama of life wheeled on in their sight. Naturalistic is their correct designation. Their aim a photographic exhibition of realities, common or noble, beautiful or mean, as might be, unfettered by any theory of ideal grace or severe law of choice. And this conception of art, fresh and virgin, avoiding all servile hold on the classical, departing essentially in its aims from the purely religious, like in spirit to the primitive Etruscan, revived after its long sleep with a genius hitherto not to the manor born in Italy, must be kept carefully in mind in comparing the relative excellences of each principle.

Subsequent knowledge improved upon the details of Masaccio; but no subsequent art has outstripped his graphic features, natural and vigorous grouping, and strongly defined character. In him lay the whole system of the new expansion. He pointed out the road, and gave examples of progress that are still a distinct school in painting; the elder in excellence as in precedence in its special direction. Some of his figures seem the counterpart of life itself. Emotion is admirably portrayed. His attitudes are dignified, and his draperies broadly and gracefully massed, sustained by correctly indicated anatomy, and appropriately moved by muscular action. There is also with him a delicate fitness of his individual to his situation, and a graphic, grand style of composition, full of vitality from its comprehending in one scenic whole minor incidents in keeping with the main story, lending to all picturesque variety of action and character, just as is seen in the actual world. Each individual falls easily and naturally into his proper position, and however numerous, there is no crowding or confusion of forms.

The disposition of his masses is most masterly, everywhere admitting space and free movement. He was partial to portraiture, introducing his friends into his compositions, and he had a chaste conception of the nude. The frescoes of the Branacci chapel in the Carmine at Florence are his best productions. They attract even now amateurs and students of all countries, and in his own time they were not less appreciated. Artists of the most diverse methods and ideas went to them for instruction. The pious Fra Angelico and the sinning Fra Filippo, antagonistic in styles as in lives; Castagno, Verrocchio, Domenico Ghirlandajo,—who of all those that studied here most resembles Masaccio in his epic individuality,—Botticelli, Perugino, Fra Bartolomeo, and the lesser artists of their times came to this chapel for artistic refreshment and vigor; and finally we see Leonardo, Raphael, and Buonarrotti modestly sitting at his feet. Raphael even transferred his “Adam and Eve” to the Loggie of the Vatican, and borrowed invention otherwise from him, beside learning purity and strength of design. Subsequently, other generations of distinguished painters went to the same unfailing fountain of inspiration. Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, Andrea del Sarto, Il Rosso, Francia-bigio, Pontormo, Pierino del Vaga; foreigners from all Europe; so that while art retained any semblance of worth and dignity this little chapel was a shrine for the edification of them all. Judge, then, what must have been their enthusiastic welcome when the public were first admitted to view these noble paintings!

There are twelve in all, though from the hand of Masaccio we possess only “Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise,” with its noble angel, so graceful, free, and impressively grand in its movement, “The Tribute Money,” “St. Peter and St. John healing the Sick,” “St. Peter bap-



tizing," in which is seen that naked, shivering youth so admirably conceived that it has always held rank as a marvel of realism in art, and "Peter raising to life a dead youth on whom the incantations of Simon Magus had failed;" five compositions in all. The last is partly the work of Filippino Lippi, who finished it after Masaccio's death. His figures consist of a group of five on the extreme left and ten in the centre, beginning with the naked boy and going to the right. Aided by the designs of the greater master, they have much of his feeling and manner, but there is in them a certain feebleness and lack of repose quite sufficient to betray a difference of touch and strength from the remaining ones.

Of the other frescoes, "St. Peter Preaching," "Healing the Cripple," "Curing Petronilla," and "The Fall of Adam" are by Masolino, who enjoys the reputation of having been the master of Masaccio. But as the latter was born in 1402, one year before Masolino, this could not have been. Both died prematurely young, within three years of each other, overtaxed in health by their devotion to art. From the superior strength and invention of Masaccio, it is more likely that, as it occurred between Raphael and Pinturicchio, he aided and inspired Masolino. This would account for their approachment of styles, and the superiority of Masolino's later to his earlier efforts, which bear more similitude to the feeling and manner of the school of Fra Angelico than to the hardier and more natural composition and historic character which characterize him in company with Masaccio.

Filippino's exclusive works are the "Crucifixion of St. Peter," "Release from Prison," and "Visitation of St. Paul." Although well preserved, these frescoes can be seen to advantage only on a clear day in the afternoon

light, on account of the darkness of the chapel, which also, from its smallness, does not admit of a proper distance for the sight. Masaccio's frescoes are the more interesting because containing portraits of himself and Masolino, vigorously and broadly treated, beside which, Filippino's likenesses of Botticelli, Pollajuolo, and himself appear meagre and hard.

To Masaccio must be accorded the distinguishing merit, as an historical painter, of being the first to technically perfect the motives and progress suggested by Giotto. He supplied what was wanting in art to the latter, and created a new school of design that has fructified all subsequent painting. By some the groundwork of his style is attributed to the teaching and example of Ghiberti and Donatello. His was a kindred but entirely independent mind. Possibly in the rules of sculpture he received hints from them. His manner, however, is wholly free from the impress of other mental power than his own. He was truer and broader in his conception of nature as a model, and less influenced by extraneous motives than any of his contemporaries. In drapery he is particularly happy, rendering it simply and naturally, indicating a correct feeling for form and movement, and, like Raphael, suggestive of individual character. His demerits are so scanty considering his epoch — the somewhat heavy and constrained figures of Adam and Eve, for instance — that they make no impression in viewing his compositions as a whole. We find in Masaccio the elements of mastery over natural obstacles struggling successfully onward, — it would be juster to say, doing the work of generations of common men in one brief lifetime, — impelled by an original skill of manipulation and wonderful inventive force. He goes straight forward to the natural and probable. His meaning must be sought

outside of himself, in the world of events. Not a trace of himself — his weaknesses, sympathies, faith, or illusions — can be detected in his pictures. Art absorbs his individuality. His are intellectual creations, leading the spectator away from the artist into his art, betraying no secrets of his own soul, but, like Shakspeare, making us instead, to know the beings and scenes his genius summons to our sight.

This sort of self-abnegation clings close to Masaccio in his fame. All the world knows his pictures, but no one knows him. Anecdotes and events told of his contemporaries, beside their own disclosures of character in their art, make Fra Filippo, Fra Angelico, and even Paolo Ucello familiar to us as men. But of the greatest of them all we only know that he painted not himself but his subject; was so absorbed by his studies as to utterly neglect his personal needs and looks, whence his nickname of Masaccio, or careless Tom, Maso being his true one; forgot to claim his dues, was disinterestedly kind and amiable, revolutionized painting, won immortality, and died so suddenly in his forty-first year (1443) as to have given rise to suspicion of poison; and thus cut off before having attained his prime, he was considered capable of still greater excellence than he had already manifested.

The Carmelite, Filippo Lippi, (1412–1469,) is an altogether new character for us. His relations intended him for a monk; nature made him a Gil Blas and an artist. Instead of attending to the grammar lessons which formed part of the preparatory studies of his novitiate, he covered his books with drawings so spiritedly done as to attract the attention of his prior, who — rare and sensible monk — permitted him to follow his bent. In company with the young artists of the day he frequented the frescoes of Ma-

saccio, then just finished in the Carmine, and being enamored of them, so thoroughly borrowed their spirit that it became a current saying that "the soul of Masaccio had passed into the body of Fra Filippo." There is, however, as much difference in their paintings as their deportments. A restless sensualist, Filippo at seventeen escaped from the discipline of his convent, and with his pencil in hand as his patrimony, went forth to learn life under the pilotage of an erratic will. He soon found there were other bolts and bars beside those of a monastery, and harder tasks than grammar lessons. For one day, near Ancona, putting out to sea with some companions in a small boat in quest of pleasure, they were captured by pirates and sold into slavery in Barbary. Thus began his novitiate into worldly life. Filippo worked hard and fared meagrely. But Fortune, who so often favors those who sport with her, prompted his Mussulman owner, in lieu of beheading him for daring, contrary to the laws of Mahomet, to make his likeness with a bit of charcoal upon a whitewashed wall, to the astonishment of his brutal fellow-slaves who looked upon it as a miracle, to give him his freedom and a commission for several pictures in color. These done to his satisfaction, the liberal-souled Moor saw him safely landed on the shores of Calabria, whence he found his way to Naples and secured the patronage of the Duke. Returning to Florence, Cosmo de' Medici became his friend and employer. But his amorous propensities so interfered with the progress of his painting that Cosmo had him locked up with his work. For two days the Frate patiently endured the confinement, but his appetite only growing the more ravenous upon this forced abstinence, one night he tore up the sheets of his bed, and making them into a rope let himself down to the street, to the imminent peril of his

graceless neck. For several days he frequented the haunts of debauchery, taking his fill of sin, and then returned to his palette and went quietly to his task again. Cosmo, thinking it inexpedient to punish him, and fearing to jeopardize his limbs by another nightly escapade, gave him his entire liberty and received him into greater favor than ever, observing that "genius had celestial wings and was not to be impounded like stray asses."

Lord Lindsay styles Cosmo "that true father of his country, whose sympathies in art and those of his son Piero were as devoutly Christian as those of Lorenzo X. were the reverse,"\* and whose "purse was ever open to the glory of God as well as the honor of his country."

The character of Catholic Cosmo is better read by the Dominican biographer † of Fra Angelico than by the Protestant historian of Christian art. "Cosmo," he writes, "was a sovereign without assuming royal titles and state. He was proclaimed the benefactor of the people and the father of his country; he ruled, he revenged, he tyrannized; his bank was his throne; he founded the kingdom of gold, the tyranny of riches, the most terrible of all, because it corrupts the most. It was a system promulgated by him, and when any one complained of the injury done to the city by the loss of the good citizens who fled from his vengeance or were banished by him, he boasted of being able to make other noblemen with two yards of fine cloth."

The naked truth is, that this "Father" of his country was the most subtle of her politicians and the most sagacious of her merchants, with the ambition of a prince, veiled by a dissimulation so profound as to deceive his own and subsequent times. With the appearance of moderation and

\* Vol. iii. p. 162.

† Cartier, p. 269.



republican simplicity, — Florence not being then ripe for ducal state and hereditary rule, — by liberal patronage to letters and arts, abundant largesses to the poor, stimulating industry by his own means, making himself the easy banker of the condottieri, aiding the families of the banished, embellishing churches, founding convents, favoring religious establishments, active, insinuating, and dexterous to seduce, attract, or gain the suffrages or confidence of all classes, profoundly relying upon the “all things to all men” principle, he gradually, and almost without exciting alarm, laid the foundations of his family grandeur on the liberties of his fellow-citizens.

This digression from Fra Filippo to his munificent patron is requisite to point out the distinction in the political fortunes of the republic and the moral effect upon the people between the Guelphic thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with their boisterous freedom, deadly perils in maintaining it, and their devout feelings, stirring, high-toned individualism, which, though factious, was devoted to Florence and all that honored her, and the corruption of manners, increase of luxury, tendency to infidelity and levity, ending, after brief, strenuous struggles on the part of a pure-minded minority to arrest the decadence of patriotic sentiment and to restore the old democratic and devout tone of public affairs, in that lethargy, pedantry, and vice, which, growing apace with the tyranny of the Medici, finally made of Tuscany the graveyard of genius and freedom.\*

\* The following extract, translated from *La Storia di Girolamo Savonarola*, by Pasquale Villari, Florence, 1859, graphically illustrates the hybrid character of Lorenzo, the Magnificent, another pernicious member of this pernicious family.

“A strange existence, truly, was that of Lorenzo! After working with all the power of his intellect and his will at the making of new laws which should crush out some last remnant of liberty, — after using his influence to obtain



The supremacy of this family was finally established upon the return of Cosmo from exile in 1434. If "his sympathies in art were devoutly Christian," they did not oppose his bestowing a more liberal and loving patronage upon the dissolute Fra Filippo than upon the saintly Fra Angelico. As a man of enlarged and cultivated mind, with religious habits, he could not have been otherwise than sensible of the peculiar virtues of the latter, but he found more attractions in the character and art of the former. Publicly, he wished to conciliate both purists and sensualists. Fra Filippo, though never attempting the lustful art which at times defiles Titian, Correggio, and Julio Romano, and which in itself was the ripened fruit of the corrupted taste and princely patronage systematically inaugurated into Italy by the crafty Medician and kindred tyrants, was nevertheless the first great sensualist in sentiment, as he was the first notoriously profligate artist among the old masters. Hence he begins a new moral aspect in painting; the hinge, as it may be termed, of the naturalistic reaction on its purely material side, and the fountain-head of much that subsequently was greatly to be regretted; its perniciousness being enhanced by the genius of its authors.

The latest conspicuous adventure of our amorous artist was his seduction and subsequent elopement with Lucretia

some new decree of confiscation or sentence of death—he would enter the Platonic Academy, and dispute with vehemence on virtue and the immortality of the soul; issuing thence, and mingling with a company of utterly depraved young men, he would sing his 'Canti Carnascialeschi,' or Carnival songs, (of infamous celebrity,) and give himself up to wine and women; then return home again, and at table, in the society of Pulci and Politian, recite verses and discourse on poetry: and to each of these pursuits he gave himself up so wholly, that each seemed to be the sole aim of his life. But the strangest thing of all is, that in the midst of such a multiform existence not a single action can we find stamped with true virtue and generosity, either towards his people, his intimates, or his kindred; and surely, were the case otherwise, his indefatigable panegyrists would hardly have neglected to record it."

Buti, a novice, scarcely out of her childhood, in the convent of Sta. Margherita at Prato. He had accidentally seen the blonde beauty, so rare in Tuscany, and being enamored, as was usual with him, at sight, slyly obtained permission to have her sit to him as a model for the Madonna, which he was painting to order for an altar-piece for the convent. The unsuspecting nuns fell into the snare, and Lucretia was allowed to be his companion during his working hours. He so well improved them in making love that the inexperienced maiden was speedily won and consented to run away with him, promising to avail herself for that purpose of the liberty to go out of the convent which would be accorded her on a coming festival. The monk's audacity was successful, and the erring Lucretia fled from her chaste sisters to become the mistress of the scapegrace painter. She loved him with constancy as well as "over much," for she was proof against every effort of the scandalized sisterhood and her distracted father to get her back. After this foul disgrace he never held up his head again. She gave birth to a son, Filippino, who, as we shall see, not only figured with distinction in art, but eschewed the evil ways of his father. Age seems neither to have tamed his fires nor improved his morals. He squandered his gains in lustful pleasures, and when he could not promptly get access to the object of his capricious desires, he sought to appease his appetite by painting from imagination the charms which inflamed him. A special license to sin seems to have been accorded to him. For we find Giovanni de' Medici writing to Bartolomeo Serragli, 27th May, 1458, referring to the affair of Lucretia, "We have laughed not a little at the '*errore*' of Fra Filippo;"\* and when Pope Eugenio wished to repair the scandal by giving him a dis-

\* Gaye, vol. i. p. 180.

pensation to wed, he bluntly refused, saying "he preferred to gratify his lust as he chose and did not care to marry." \* Some accounts have it that his death was occasioned by poison, given by the relatives of a married lady with whom he had an intrigue, while employed on his last work, an altar-piece for the Spoleto Cathedral.† Poor in purse he always was, in consequence of his vagabond, dissipated life; but his remains were honored with a magnificent tomb at Spoleto, in its holiest sanctuary, erected at the charge of Lorenzo de' Medici, after the refusal of the inhabitants to give up his corpse to him for still more honored obsequies in the Duomo of Florence. They pertinently observed that Florence had a superfluity of distinguished men while they were poorly provided, and begged permission to retain the corpse of this much-admired artist. Angelo Poliziano wrote verses in his praise, inscribed them upon his tomb, and printed them in his works. Licentious as he was, he secured the friendship and esteem of many, and in death received honors which contrast singularly with the silence in which his equal in art, though in another vein, and his superior infinitely in moral worth, passed from earth, the meek Fra Angelico. But it is presumable that the qualities of Fra Filippo's heart and manners were such as were then most current with society at large.

Fra Filippo is, perhaps, the first great Italian artist who substituted for the ideal type of the Madonna the natural traits of living models, usually in his case those of his mistress; an example soon largely followed, though there still lingers among some of his and later types of sacred personages somewhat of the old sentiment of flesh purified and spirit sanctified. In all men's lives there are moments

\* Vasari, vol. iv. p. 129.

† Pilkington's *Dict. of Painters*, London, 1852, and Baldinucci, vol. i. p. 513.

of healthful reflection and holy desire. Their inspiration, dormant though it mostly remains, will at times outflash from the hearts into the pencils and pens of artists and authors, and illumine their works with a light which, when compared with their average character, may almost seem celestial. So it is with Fra Filippo. He ennobles expression occasionally with winsome tenderness, grace, and dignity. His forms are grand without being colossal; his draperies broadly and beautifully disposed, inclined to the sharp and angular; his colors strong, dingy brown prevailing, with marked contrasts, frequently wanting in harmony; while in general he lacks repose and indulges in coarse expression. From the ugliness of his infant Christs one has but an indifferent idea of his sympathy for babies. He throws intense expression, such as it is, into the features of his subject. In painting, no face more overflows with sly sensuality and obscene humor than that of the monk, half squinting at the spectator from the group of saints on the right hand of the Virgin, in his elaborate composition of the "Coronation." \* Angels with him usually are vulgar rogues. His pictorial life is low, humorous, tending to the sensual, impetuous, lacking refinement in the disposition of limbs, and he has but a vague idea of the proprieties of his subjects. The external world and its coarse enjoyments being so much to his taste, his pictures could not wholly escape their influence. Religious topics were imposed upon him by his patrons. He painted because his active talents found vent thereby, rather than from any deep understanding of the dignity and meaning of art or elevated conception of the subjects given him. Consequently, while he often surprises by vigor and naïveté, he rarely inspires lofty emotion. Always strongly

\* No. 41, Florentine Academy.

naturalistic, he displays a questionable sort of love of the landscape, associated, doubtless, in his mind with its sense of wild freedom.

His best works are the frescoes of the choir of the Duomo at Prato. They represent the histories of St. Stephen and St. John the Baptist, and are remarkable for vigorous delineation of character, though as usual with him having but small affinity with sacred themes.

By will he made his pupil Fra Diamante (born 1400) guardian to his son Filippino. The former has much in common in style with his master, less vigor and breadth, especially in drapery, weaker design, but with a more refined and poetical expression and a decided fondness for flowers. Away from Florence his works are often mistaken for Fra Filippo's. The time of his death is unknown.

The legitimate successor to Fra Filippo, giving to painting a further impulse in the same direction, but with greater variety and refinement, was Alesandro Filipepi (1437-1515), also a Florentine. When a boy he manifested so much talent that his father, entertaining great hopes of his future eminence, bestowed much attention upon his education. But being capricious and extravagant, he so thwarted his parents that he apprenticed him to a goldsmith, from whom he derived his subsequent name — Sandro Botticelli — and finally the profession in which he distinguished himself. The taste and knowledge in design and ornament acquired by Botticelli in this initiatory course he largely infused into painting and engraving, which latter he was one of the first to practise. They disciplined his hand to a beautiful, firm finish, strength of outline, and a questionable partiality in the use of gold in hair, and even in landscape and architecture, to give greater brilliancy to his lights.



He passed from the goldsmith's shop into the studio of Fra Filippo, in which he soon arose to distinction on the foundation of his own genius, though his early style and coloring had much in common with those of his master. There is no reason for believing that he participated in his vices, although like him he was impetuous and eccentric, and had in his nature a grain of vagabondism. Sandro was a dry joker, a heedless liver, a spendthrift, always anticipating his income, in his prime with a sufficient flow of wit to ward off the worst effects of his follies, and yet so inclined to abstraction that his affairs never prospered. He was, however, influenced in his old age by the preaching of Savonarola, and becoming attached to his party destroyed whatever of his art came under the ban of the monk's strict purism. Towards the close of his life he was reduced to extreme indigence. Indeed, he would have starved, had it not been for the charity of Lorenzo de' Medici and after him other Florentine gentlemen.\* Even this humiliating resource finally failed. One morning, no one knowing when he breathed his last, he was found dead; a wretched cessation on earth of great talents, which with better habits would have secured to him honorable wealth.

Botticelli's heads are touchingly sweet, with a sort of boding sadness, from which not even his angels or his Venuses are exempt, and which is very noticeable in his Madonnas, as if there was a pensive misgiving at the bottom of his soul as to his own manner of life. His faces lack intellectual force, but his figures have wonderful tenderness and grace, with a corresponding dignity and power of action. He is, however, extremely unequal, often betrayed into rigidity, awkwardness, and exaggeration, and sometimes, in his smaller pictures, into mannerism and even absolute

\* Baldinucci, vol. i. p. 569.



ugliness. Haste and carelessness are not unfrequent. Many of his paintings, particularly his celebrated "Calumny" of the Uffizi Gallery, want repose, and too strongly recall the craft of the goldsmith. Still, not excepting his worst manner, he is singularly attractive from his vigorous, broad sweep of pencil, precision, and firmness, and the simple refinement of many of his minor motives. The head of his Judith in his small picture of that subject in the Uffizi best expresses the unrelenting firmness of purpose, exaltation of motive, mingled with a womanly dread of blood, of the Jewish maid, of any treatment of the subject by other pencils that we have seen. The distinction of character he draws between the servant and the mistress in this tragedy is nicely done; as a whole it is much superior in dramatic action and the accessories of the composition to Cristofano Allori's celebrated picture, which, beside it, is theatrical and declamatory. Botticelli's narrates the event and recalls its emotions.

In coloring he is in general weak, adhering to the Florentine tone of the period; at times delicate and sympathetic, and never low or sensual. His predilection in composition is towards the fanciful and allegorical, and he evidently prefers mythology and history to purely religious topics. The nude female is a favorite subject, though always treated with perfect chastity, and confined to one type, of exquisite loveliness. He followed the example of Masaccio, then in fact generally adopted, of introducing into sacred compositions the portraits and costumes of his time, disregarding historical and ideal proprieties by making contemporaries figure among the scenes and mystical ideas that underlie Christianity. In his "Adoration of the Magi" in the Uffizi, the king kissing the feet of Jesus is the first Cosmo de' Medici; a son of his and a

relative represent the other two. In one sense paintings thus composed acquire additional interest, but one quite apart from their real character. This species of innovation shortly became a fruitful source of impious flattery. Hireling artists represented their patrons, not as formerly humbly kneeling in devotional attitudes at the feet of saints, beseeching their intercession for the good gifts of eternal life, or doing penance, but as saints themselves, with all their symbolical glory and signs of martyrdom, on the strength of a Christian name in common. Many a scandalous dame in dainty array and jewelled front has come down to us the incarnation of virtuous self-sacrifice as foreign to her life as to her disposition; and we surely may be permitted to laugh over the silly falsehood that sought to pass off an aristocratic cyprian as an immaculate virgin, or bride of Heaven.\*

The biblical subjects in fresco of the Sistine chapel at Rome, done by Botticelli about 1474, fairly illustrate his good and bad points. His pictures are not uncommon in galleries, and of late have risen much in public esteem, which they well merit from their peculiar individuality and earnestness.

Piero della Francesca, of San Sepolcro (1400-1494), more akin to Paolo Ucello than to Masaccio, especially in his choice of subjects and love of science, was a diligent student and an artist of much repute in his day. His example and attainments did much to form the growing schools of Umbria and Romagna, their best men like him delighting in those difficulties of foreshortening, perspec-

\* The mistresses of Allori, Vandyke, and others, not to speak of the wives and daughters — Rubens's for one — of many painters, figure as their Madonnas. No. 232 of the Pitti Gallery is catalogued as a "Holy Family," though they are portraits of the Grand Duchess Vittoria della Rovere and her son, afterwards Cosmo III. de' Medici, by Susterman.

tive, and breadth of design, which were then the chief novelties and problems of naturalistic art. Despite his long life, there is little left by which to judge him. His general manner is hard, without much feeling for color, more for form and a love of calm, broad landscape, full of light. Some of his heads are gracefully felt. His best pieces are battles and historical scenes, vividly done and with a close observation of nature. He is specially noted for his studies in the science of perspective.

Piero was the teacher of Luca Signorelli of Cortona (1441–1524), who with Antonio (1433–1498) and Piètro Pollajuolo (1443–1496) and Andrea del Verrocchio (1432–1488) of Florence, paid close attention to the study of the nude, which, through the growing influence of sculpture, was then coming more into esteem. The latter three were more eminent as sculptors, bronzists, and workers in metals, than as painters. Verrocchio numbered among his pupils Perugino, Lorenzo di Credi, and Leonardo da Vinci. He painted but few pictures, which Vasari justly calls “hard and crude,” though he was a diligent student and acquired much knowledge, particularly of design. His best-known picture is his “Baptism of Christ” in the Florentine Academy, harsh in coloring, bold in form, and mainly interesting as containing the angel painted by the youthful Leonardo, the sight of which, so surpassing his own, caused Verrocchio to give up painting and confine himself to sculpture. As a boyish effort it might have been remarkable, but except graceful feeling it has little to distinguish it from its companion. The influence of Verrocchio, in the character of his landscape, particularly the crystalline blue of his mountains, and their sharp, perpendicular lines, may be traced long afterwards in the paintings of his distinguished pupils, most marked of all in Leonardo’s

“*Vièrge aux Rochers*,” “*Leda*,” and the “*Holy Family*,” which we have brought to this country.\* Although Verrocchio went to Rome expressly to study the antique, the Florentine bias towards severe realism always prevailed in his style.

The brothers Pollajuoli are of greater repute in painting. Like Verrocchio, they learned anatomy direct from nature. He took casts of the nude to assist his design, but Antonio Pollajuolo, according to Lanzi, was the first Italian artist who dissected human bodies for this purpose. Neither of the brothers is remarkable for copious or grand invention. They are scientists; their specialty being severe modelling, strong, sharp outline, and a conspicuous leaning towards muscular movement and display. Piero, however, has tender sentiment and graceful conception, with a chaste taste in details, if we may judge by the favorable specimen of the *Annunciation* he has left us in the Church of St. Miniato al Monte that overlooks Florence, and the same subject, delightfully treated, catalogued No. 76 in the Appendix to this work.

Both brothers treat landscape after the broad, open manner of Piero della Francesca, introducing into it no little skill of perspective for their time, and a multitude of interesting and appropriate details, near and far off, showing a graphic conception of the variety of nature and the laws of distance, with an accurate eye for form though an indifferent feeling for color. They were, perhaps, more eminent as workers in metals than as painters. And it almost invariably happens that artists who combine these pursuits, bronzists and others, in their paintings show a predilection for tints akin to those of the metals on which they bestowed their highest skill and the larger portion of their time.

\* See, in Appendix, Documents and pl. N, figs. 40, 41.

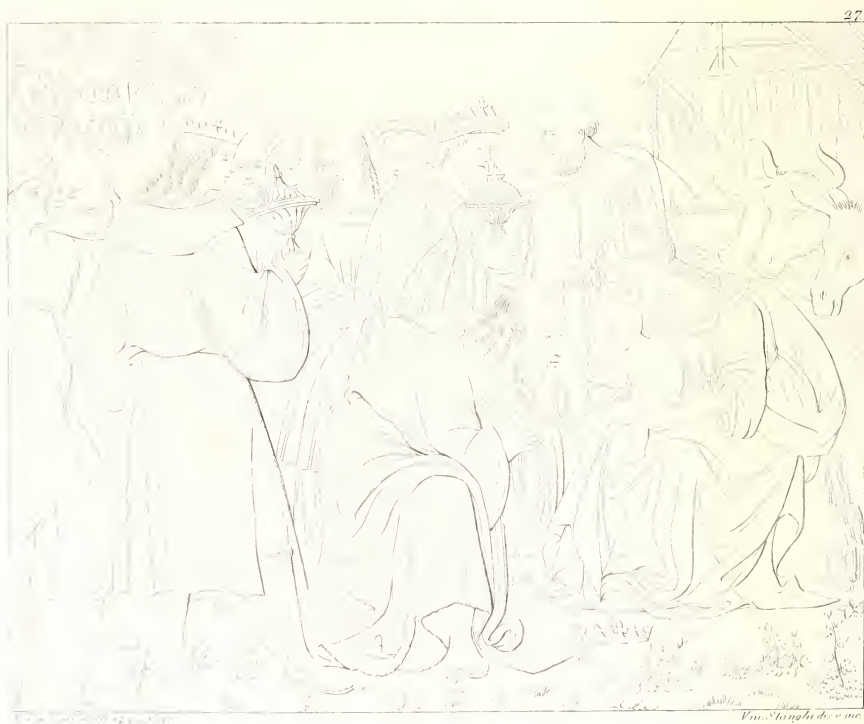
But in that fine picture in the Uffizi, "Saints Jacobo, Eustachio, and Vincenzo," the tone of the draperies is almost Venetian in warmth. In general feeling it approaches the firmness and precision of the best German work, and is remarkable for its deep repose and quiet dignity. The labors of Hercules and mythological subjects at large were favorite themes with Antonio.\* Piero painted a St. Christopher at St. Miniato nearly twenty feet high, whose colossal proportions were frequently copied by Michel Angelo when a young man. Andrea del Castagno instructed Piero in oil painting. But at this date and later, fresco continued to retain its ascendancy on account of its facilities for rapid and grand work. Even tempera for easel pictures yielded very slowly to the use of oils. At this time fine canvas was occasionally employed by Florentine artists for tempera paintings. We have seen a few examples of its use by Ucello, Gozzoli, Botticelli, and Lorenzo di Credi, but it met with no general favor. Beside numerous portraits after the hard, dry manner of his school, Antonio painted for the Pucci family the celebrated "Death of St. Sebastian," bought in 1857 for the National Gallery of London for the sum of fifteen thousand dollars, although it had suffered greatly from injudicious restorations. The artist received for it only three hundred dollars, which as was said at the time did not pay for his colors.

Of the lineal artistic precursors of Michel Angelo the most remarkable is Luca Signorelli. His character corresponds to his artistic fame. He was courteous, warm-hearted, and sincere; an earnest man, too; liberally in-

\* Pl. I, fig. 26, "Hercules destroying Nessus," catalogued in the Appendix, No. 75; a favorable specimen of this rare master, showing his delicate precision of design, which the engraving does no justice to, and his character of landscape, which is quite wonderful for the date of the picture. The background is the Val d' Arno, with Florence and Prato in the distance.











structing others, and giving away his designs to those who could benefit by them. In conversation he was exceedingly amiable and fascinating. Among the reminiscences of his early boyhood Vasari recalls a visit of the venerable Luca to his family at Arezzo, and relates with much self-congratulation that he was petted by this distinguished painter, who blessed him and predicted his career in the same honored profession. But with all his suavity of manner he had the firmness of heart of a stoic. His son, a promising youth, having been killed, he ordered the corpse to be laid naked in his room, where, without shedding a tear or once leaving it, he remained until he had sketched a striking likeness of the whole body. He dressed richly, lived magnificently, and at home and abroad was equally held in high estimation.

Like others of his peculiar predilection for design he is not strong in color. Many of his paintings now exhibit dark, slaty, or disagreeable brick tints in his flesh, and a want of harmony and naturalness in the hues of his landscapes. Much of this, however, is owing to chemical changes in his coloring. Some of his paintings compare in harmony, force, and richness of painting with the best of the contemporary Tuscans or Umbrians. In his motives and forms there is a wide departure from preceding masters. He is partial to the nude and anatomical design. Severity and grandeur, with a corresponding dignity of movement, characterize his drawing. In perfection of majestic repose, or fantastic, vigorous action, Michel Angelo himself scarcely excels him. Indeed, he did not disdain to borrow from Signorelli's wonderful composition of the "End of the World," in the Orvieto cathedral, ideas for his own "Last Judgment."

It was a strange though happy choice, that an artist dif-

fering so widely from Fra Angelico should have been selected to finish painting the chapel at Orvieto begun by the latter. No contrast can be more vivid. Signorelli's fertile invention of condemning angels and demons in wild turmoil snatching their human prey, with fearful struggle, frantic gesture, and accumulated agony on the one side, and torturing, terrible beyond utterance, on the other, the victims of God's wrath being plunged headlong into unquenchable flames, vehement in action, grouped without confusion, a vivid variety, power, and reality animating the whole spectacle, appalls the spectator. Preceding creations, being monotonous repetitions of Byzantine inventions or plagiarisms from Dante's forcible imagery, had become ineffective. Here we have original thought with an intensified diabolism and despair, depending, as heretofore, not on mere brutal forms for horror, as with Orgagna, Spinello, and Fra Angelico, but upon the action and expression of evil spirits whose organisms are almost human. Their inventions recognized in hell's demonology distinct creations, without likeness to man, and as far removed below him in the power and ugliness of sin as heaven's hierarchy is above in the beauty and power of holiness. But Signorelli calls up out of their everlasting burnings devils with such transformations only from humanity's shape as it might be supposed to undergo by the force of unchecked lusts, passions, and despair. Of a verity, his are God's avenging ministers of evil; overflowing with wrath and affright; filled with the violence and desire of wickedness; men, as incarnated devils and the damned, recognizing their coming likenesses in them: such is his idea of the inhabitants of hell.

The group of the lustful, satyr-eared demon, with bat-wings and stunted, crooked horns, the embodiment of sen-

suality in its defiled nakedness, flying as rapid as light towards hell, holding tightly by the hands, as his savory morsel of pleasure, a beautiful, adulterous woman, supported on his back, said to be the likeness of a noted courtesan of the time, with lust glowing in every feature, while her eyes instinctively turn in despairing petition towards the archangels, who precipitate devils and damned headlong to their final doom, is wondrously conceived. So, too, the gigantic demon, in this instance without any of the customary diabolical accessories, simply a naked, powerful man, drunk with the spirit of murder, standing over the prostrate body of a naked, licentious woman, with one foot upon her head, holding it firmly against the ground, whilst with both hands he tightens the rope about her neck with which he strangles her. The victim's starting eyeballs, and look of anguish, more even of mind than body, are a nightmare of horror.

No one before his time so understandingly grappled with this fearful theme. In thoroughness of knowledge of design, and perhaps in variety and vehemence, Signorelli, as is to be expected from his epoch, must yield the palm to Michel Angelo. Like him he has deep meaning and impressive grandeur; while he escapes his peculiar, though not uniform, exaggeration. His angels are remarkable for graceful strength and easy, natural flow of drapery, especially the one scattering flowers, part of a group in his *Paradise* holding a festival with the elect.\* But his celestial scenes have not the spiritual atmosphere which Fra Angelico alone was perfect in. The artist often intrudes upon the sentiment by the lavish display of his power, although between him and his subject there is more unity than came later of his school.† Signorelli's early

\* Agincourt, p. 156.

† Luca Signorelli's frescoes at Orvieto in 1845 gave occasion to one of those



frescoes in the Vatican are quite Umbrian in their character of landscape, for which in general, unlike Michel Angelo, he manifested true feeling. "The Adoration of the Magi,"\* is a beautiful specimen of his best manner, in perfect condition, deep and harmonious in color, strong and graceful in design, admirably grouped, and although the picture is but twelve inches by sixteen, it contains twenty-three figures, and has the force, clearness, and breadth of fresco painting.

While Florence was acquiring so brilliant a reputation through the school of Masaccio, Siena, adhering to her primary types and motives, produced no artists of eminence in the new manner. Domenico, the nephew of Taddeo di Bartolo, in 1438 and subsequent years, painted at first in the style of his uncle, but later, influenced no doubt by the Florentines, became more dramatic and naturalistic. He cannot, however, be compared with them, being unharmonious in composition, though his horses and costumes furnished studies for Pinturicchio and the youthful Raphael sixty years afterwards.

The technical progress which is suggested by the works of Giovanni di Paolo was more fully developed by his son Matteo, who flourished in the latter half of the fifteenth century. He has been called the Masaccio of Siena, an honor deserved, however, only by contrast with those immediately about him and for the impulse in a kindred direction which, though late, he gave to the artists of his native

art-loving deeds which shows the power of these silent walls over kindred feeling. Though the "old master" be dead, he yet speaks. Two artists in their travels, — be their names and lineage ever kept green, — Bothe and Pfauneschmidt, Germans, seeing the ruinous and neglected condition of those paintings, at their own expense and with their own hands completely cleaned and restored them, as a tribute of respect and admiration to their author, and so much to the satisfaction of the inhabitants that they were made honorary citizens and otherwise distinguished.

\* Pl. I, fig. 27.

city and of Naples, substituting in both cities oil for tempera. In general he is hard and monotonous; sharp in outline, inclining to the precision but not arriving at the truth of design of Mantegna, with more dignity than grace, and fond of architectural ornamentation, in which he imitates Francesco di Giorgio. Adhering to the Sieneſe taste for flowers, he gives good relief to his figures, which, though displaying much sameness of expression, are of a pleasing type. His anatomical knowledge is in advance of his brethren, but his range of thought is limited and his invention meagre. Indeed, he often degenerates into mannerism and in straining after force and movement, as in his favorite subject, "The Massacre of the Innocents," arrives at exaggeration and even caricature. There is much truth of pitiless slaughter in his masterpiece in the Church of St. Agostino at Siena, but as a whole it is repulsive. He was equal only to the vulgar cruelties and physical agonies of the harrowing spectacle, repeated and distorted to the verge of dramatic madness, with a leaden tone of color that chills the blood. In some details he has much merit. But as he is the sole master of repute of his day at Siena who departed widely from its legitimate succession of motives and style in painting, it is evident that there existed in this school no hearty sympathy with naturalism as in Florence. Fungai, who painted still later, can scarcely be placed in the same connection. He had considerable talent, but is conspicuous chiefly for weakness of color and a confusion of preceding styles, with not sufficient original power to amalgamate his gleanings from others into a new and harmonious whole. Though if the Sieneſe ever indulged in drollery in art, he might be accused of an attempt in one of his pictures,\* in which he represents the infant Christ

\* A *Tondo* in possession of Metzgher and Brothers at Florence.

atrociously fat, supported by angels in a way anything but seemly.

Among the Florentine naturalists of this period, though of no special importance, we find Alessio Baldovinetti (1425-1499), Francesco Pesello (1380-1457), and his son Pesellino (1426-1457). The first was not destitute of religious feeling, but his style was stiff and mannered. His landscape is well composed, the perspective good, broadly treated in its great lines and filled with carefully sketched details of its minor features, just as the whole was seen from his familiar points of view about Florence.

Pesello made animals a special study, keeping live ones in his house to draw from. Fra Filippo Lippi was the master of Pesellino. His style is vigorous, outlines sharply defined, and his execution highly finished. He has considerable variety of invention. The best specimen of his powers now in Florence is a gradino in the Casa Buonarrotti, containing stories from the life of St. Niccolo, given with much animation and force.

Cosimo Rosselli (1439-1506) was more in repute as an artist than the preceding names. He was employed on large frescoes, which still being in good condition keep alive his reputation. At times he is dry and meagre; at others warm and varied, with some poetical feeling and considerable repose of manner. In general his compositions are crowded, with no effective unity or well-placed masses, but they display considerable skill in details, graceful female heads, and dignified male figures in the picturesque costumes of his period. He is not without a certain mingled grandeur and sweetness of feeling in the conception of the "Madonna in Glory."\* His best work is the "Miracle of the Sacrament," a fresco in the Church of St. Ambrogio,

\* Pl. J, fig. 29.

Florence. Sixtus VI. called him, in conjunction with Signorelli and other distinguished artists to Rome, to decorate the Sistine chapel. Conscious of his limited powers in comparison with his rivals, he used much gold in the ornamental parts of his compositions to heighten their brilliancy, hoping thereby to secure for them in the untrained eyes of the pontiff the preference over the neighboring frescoes. The ruse was successful, the others appearing at first glance cold and meagre beside his, which, however, in real genius noways equalled them. Signorelli's topic was the "Life of Moses," which he treated with much grandeur and dignity, leaving it, however, intellectually cold, as if his thought had overpowered his sentiment. Rosselli's subjects were "The Drowning of Pharoah," "Christ preaching by the Sea of Tiberias," and the "Last Supper." In the landscape of the second he was assisted by Piero di Cosimo (1441-1521 ?), his pupil; an artist of greater originality and more power.

Piero stands quite alone in style and humor; being bizarre, capricious, fantastic, inventive, and by freaks gloomy or sprightly; brilliant and delicate in color, sensuous in tone, and careless or careful as the whim seized him. Indeed, as a whole his style reminds one of a musical medley, in which feeling, imagination, and reason are strangely consorted, and yet not unhappily, subduing criticism and exciting emotion by the force of vagaries and contrasts of expression.

He was as strange in his habits as original in his art. After the death of his master he gave himself up to the most extraordinary eccentricities, detesting society, permitting no one to see him work, eating like an animal only when hungry and in solitude, conforming to nature as he called it, not allowing his garden to be cultivated, but depending upon what spontaneously grew, and in so many and

disagreeable ways manifesting his oddity that he was said to be more beast than man. He took pleasure in painting frightful imagery of mortality; deaths and all sorts of forbidding fantasies; bacchanals, harpies, satyrs, and monsters; and he could paint angels also of a certain kind, with a diligent finish imitated from Leonardo, whose style greatly fascinated him.

Piero's fantastic genius found special employment during carnivals. One of his extraordinary inventions is thus described by Vasari. The spectacle was "The Triumph of Death," and it took the citizens by surprise, for not a suspicion of its character had got abroad until it was completed and in their midst.

"The triumphal Car was of great size, covered with black cloth, with skeletons and white crosses painted upon it, and drawn by hideous black buffaloes. Within it stood a colossal spectre of Death with his scythe. All about him were covered tombs, which opened at places where the procession halted. Those forming it chanted lugubrious songs, while certain figures disguised as skeletons crept out from the tombs. Maskers bearing torches, presenting before and behind death's heads and skeleton necks, horribly faithful to nature, closed around the car. Trumpets wailed forth doleful moans, at whose summons the dead came out of their tombs and sung most dismally,

*'Morti scani, come vedete,  
Così morte vedren voi :  
Fummo già come voi siete,  
Vo sarete come noi,' &c.*

*We are dead as you behold us,  
But thus dead we you shall see ;  
We were once as you are now,  
But you soon shall be as we."*\*

Before and behind the car rode a train of the dead on

\* Bohn's Vasari, vol. ii. p. 418.



the most wretched and leanest horses, half dead themselves and caparisoned in black with white crosses upon their cloths, each animal conducted by four attendants clad in grave clothes, bearing black torches and black standards covered with crosses, bones, and death's heads. As the entire cortége sung in dismal unison the Miserere of David, all the spectators were filled with mingled terror and admiration.

During the balmy period of art in Florence the celebration of carnivals and the ceremonies attending public events called forth the fantastic invention, regardless of expense, of the best artists ; so that those sights acquired an artistic value that has never since been revived in Italy or seen elsewhere. Indeed, they were one of the most cherished institutions of the land. Nor were they always conducted with a due regard to propriety and humanity ; for we read that at one given on the election of Leo X. to the papacy, a baker's lad was hired for ten scudi to represent the age of gold reviving, as a naked boy covered from head to feet with gold-leaf. So great were his sufferings that as the procession came to an end he died.

Piero's religious pictures have no true sentiment. They are artificial, good only occasionally in heads and the beauty and variety of landscape backgrounds. With nature he had real sympathy, besides a taste for mythological subjects of a painful character. He painted animals for his time with much freedom, spirit, and knowledge of form. Sometimes he gives to his figures extremely small and delicately drawn feet and hands, out of correct proportion and evidently a caprice of refinement. Many of his pictures of the above class are in the Uffizi, unfortunately all "refreshed" by the same hand, hard and porce-



lain-like, to the utter destruction of his own best tones, and that "morbidezza" of his latest style—for he was constantly changing—which he imparted to his pupil Andrea del Sarto.

To the last, Piero was as eccentric as ever ; more repulsively so, for finally no one could remain with him. His diet was hard eggs, which he boiled by fifties in his glue-pot, eating them while they lasted, whatever might be their condition. Death by the hand of justice he prodigiously commended, saying it was a fine thing to be led forth to die in the clear, bright, open air, among a crowd of spectators, comforted with sugar-plums and kind words, and the people praying for you to enter Paradise with the angels. His religious opinions were quite as novel as his habits and pictures, and so upon the whole we must consider him an uncomfortable man and painter. Indeed he came to an uncomfortable ending, for he was found dead one morning at the foot of a staircase, where he had fallen, no one being able to tell when or how.

The direct successor to Fra Filippo and Botticelli is the son of the former, Filippino, (1460–1505.) With less genius than either, he imbibed from both much of their respective styles, which he ultimately blended into an independent manner, introducing into his pictures a great variety of ornamentation, grotesque and otherwise, particularly in architecture taken from classical designs and the antiquities of Rome. This manner, with flowers, arms, mantles, vases, and scroll-work, in fine, a lavish introduction of *genre* accessories merely for rich effect, was also adopted by Squarcione, Mantegna, Ghirlandajo, and others, and ultimately perfected by Raphael. Frames were now made after the designs of Roman and Grecian architecture, built up with heavy cornices, pediments, pilasters, and base, and largely

decorated in the same manner. Within legitimate bounds the innovation was pleasing. It arose in part from the desire to surround sacred personages with beautiful and significant objects, and partly, as the spiritual sentiment died out, to substitute something whereby to amuse the intellect and gratify the senses. But it soon degenerated into excessive and incongruous ornamentation, overburdening the proper motives of sacred pictures with details having nothing in common with them, and for no other purpose than as displays of curious handicraft and bizarre taste. The earlier religious masters equally delighted in ornament; but their accessories were in close keeping with their subjects. Now the popular taste had begun to prefer idle show to true feeling. In its worst aspect it was like the shade of mouldy paganism creeping out of its tomb to cast a baleful gleam over its old rival and conqueror, Christianity. What had swords and helmets, cinerary arms, banners and trophies, togas and vases, and what not of fantastic, grotesque design, — monsters, satyrs, and fauns, the sensual imagery of defunct heathendom, its poetry burned to ashes, — what had such things, however cunningly put together in chiaroscuro, gilding, or color, to do with Madonnas, Saints, and God incarnated? They were the voices of those preaching in a wilderness, whom a great multitude went but to see. They were the signs of the incoming infidelity and its attendant vices; the advancing tide of sensuality which naturalism had let into painting; the unpropitious marriage of low motives to high, neglectful of the Master's injunction to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. By this censure we do not condemn classical art and its adjuncts, nor naturalism with its dry realism. Each had its rightful purpose and uses. Each is a necessary

stone in the building of the temple of high art. For humanity is eclectic, and its faculties diverse; and all require action, that the whole being be kept in healthful energy. The evil of one thing may be the appropriate good of another. In art, as in life, it is requisite to keep things to their rightful uses and in their proper relations, in order to get out of them all their possible good and delight.

We can, therefore, take pleasure after their kind in the mythological, naturalistic, and decorative fashions of this period in art, esteeming them at their proper relative value of motive. And though the practice brought into vogue by Filippino was not a happy one for sacred themes, yet there is much to admire in his executive skill. There was nothing low-minded in him or his art. He was greatly beloved by the young nobles of Florence for his courtesy and amiability, and much in request at festivals on account of his genial disposition and talents in designing amusing spectacles. The stain of his birth and the vices of his father were forgotten in his virtues, for they conciliated all classes of citizens. He lived modestly and prudently, and died greatly regretted when only forty-five years old.

His pleasing character is traceable throughout his paintings. They indicate industry, sincerity, and careful study; considerable vigor and sweetness; correct design, warmer coloring than his teachers, dignified though not highly elevated types of beauty, and in general a partiality for historical composition. His draperies are somewhat cumbersome, though his action is lively and natural. Having to stand the closest comparison with Masaccio, whose unfinished frescoes he completed, he appears to less advantage than he would, were his works completely isolated, while his propinquity in Sta. Maria Novella to Domenico Ghirlandajo subjects him to another severe test. Still he well holds his

ground as being a good if not a great master. His finest easel picture is an altar-piece (1480) in the Badia Church at Florence ; the "Madonna appearing to St. Bernard." It is well painted, but lacks simplicity, and rises to no elevated, spiritual conception. The whole scene is earthly, and from that point of view well put. None of this class of painters soars above the range of the historical and natural in the compositions in which supernal motives predominate. Eschewing symbolism, having no ecstatic visions, they take firm hold of fact and substance, and address themselves successfully to the common understandings and experiences of the world, more desirous of pleasing by the accessories of their art, their technical skill, and their realistic thought, than of stirring the soul by suggestions of its latent destinies. They are, however, equally removed from the empty manual dexterity, that entire preponderance of mere external form and muscular movement, which belongs to the decadence of their school. For although in a religious sense their works may not be classed as spiritual, still they were intensely imbued with the spirit of their subject-matter, as it shaped itself in their minds. They projected their souls into their paintings, governed by the science of art, and thus, without arriving at the ecstatic or mystical, which, so far from aspiring to it, they rather avoided, they became vital and natural. Spiritual in the sense of the outpouring of feeling into form they indeed were ; eschewing, if not from piety, at all events from profounder knowledge and deeper insight into the principles and purposes of art, that materialism which subsequently, as it were, alike banished God and nature from it. With them work was not pronounced "good" unless it gave evidence of a living soul.

We now come to one who, in the above respects, was

not only a great master, excelling all his predecessors since Masaccio, and developing painting technically even beyond him, but whose intellect was capable of appropriately conceiving, historically treated however, the loftier view of sacred themes. He seldom introduced the supernal element into his compositions; but when he did, it is elevated much above the common, with a freshness of treatment and fertility of invention that mark a broad mental grasp. This was Domenico Curradi (1449-1498), a Florentine, known as Ghirlandajo, from the fact that his father, who was a goldsmith, was famous for his artificial garlands, once forbidden by sumptuary laws, but all the dearer for that to his fair townswomen, who now wore them with impunity. Domenico at first was an apprentice to his father. But while in the shop he passed his time in so admirably drawing the likenesses of his neighbors that his father placed him at once in the studio of Baldovinetti. He soon outgrew his teacher, and entered upon an independent career, characterized by great refinement and intellectual force. His art, like Masaccio's, is remarkably free from himself as an individual. It is the pure creation of his mind, according to its own naturalistic laws, betraying no secrets of the man. This subjection of feeling and mental consciousness to art in the abstract is extremely rare, and obtains only in those whose faculties are well balanced and under the strict guidance of reason. Ghirlandajo's characters act themselves, and not him. Irrespective of his own sentiments, he fits to his types the circumstances of emotion, action, or thought proper to their several conditions of being. With less capacity, Filippino attempts the same. Literally their art pertains to the object, reflects its image, vitalizes it with its appropriate form and expression; hence we may intelligently term it objective, in distinction



from the more common expression based upon the opposite tendency of individual feeling.

Of the private life and habits of Domenico we know but little. He was exceedingly ambitious, and desirous of great undertakings, holding his gains as of little account in comparison with the honor of his profession. He died prematurely, in his forty-fourth year, greatly lamented by his own kin, and by citizens and strangers. Brief as was his career, he condensed into it much important work. His easel pictures, unfortunately seldom to be seen intact, are not uncommon. They display the broad manner of his frescoes, not, however, upon a par with them, for in general they are crowded, as if he felt the want of material space. He loves distant views of the sea and varied, lively backgrounds. His Madonnas are dignified and matronly and his infant Christs graceful and attractive, neither, however, idealized beyond the standard of the best specimens of women and children about him. In general his taste is severe and correct, purely Tuscan, without any admixture of the classical element. He was perhaps the first of the great Florentines whose innovation upon the orthodox forms of religious compositions is very marked. One of his figures in a sacred scene he supplies with spectacles. At times there is too palpable a liking for striking attitudes and strong movement; not inharmonious of themselves, but seemingly got up as exhibitions of peculiar skill or management of forms and draperies, so that we are often more struck by details than by the composition as a whole, and are thus led from the fundamental motive to parts or accessories. Not unfrequently, the most attractive figures or groups are those that have the least connection with the story; introduced alike in disregard of historical propri-



ety and artistic unity. Several examples of this weakening of the superior by the force of the inferior motive exist in those magnificent frescoes of his, in the choir of Sta. Maria Novella, of the Life of the Virgin. One of the most harmonious of this series is the "Visitation." Mary and Elizabeth are noble figures, with the graceful dignity that belongs to high breeding. Their Florentine attendants, beautiful females of noble families clad in the picturesque costumes of his epoch, are admirably and symmetrically grouped. Domenico delights in aristocratic women, and his pencil evidently has a graphic sympathy with noble birth and manners. Even his waiting-maids show high blood. They are always ladies and by providing them with wings and lengthening their full, rich draperies, he readily transforms them into angels. Not such, altogether, as would have been approved by the severe sentiment of the religious masters, but doubtless quite like the idea of angels entertained by the lovers of the women themselves. In this picture his landscape is wonderfully varied and attractive. It is perhaps his best, leading the eye over a great space of cultivated country, and suggesting still wider expanse and beauty by a group of men who are leaning upon a wall which partly intercepts the view, and so occupied with the prospect before them as to turn their backs upon the greeting of the holy women. In the incidental introduction of motives like this we perceive one of the chief distinctions in feeling between naturalism and purism. No painter of the latter class would have ventured upon any action or incident not strictly in harmony with the main sentiment. In Ghirlandajo's "Birth of the Virgin" and "Presentation at the Temple," of the same series, there are more striking incongruities, if we judge them from the mystic point of view, but





Francesco Roselli 1450-1490



D. Ghirlandajo 1440-1495



Francesco Roselli 1450-1490



Giovanni da Paderna 1490-1495

Fon. Stanghi decor





if from the purely naturalistic, we may consider them as a species of by-play introduced to add animation and variety to the paintings.

Domenico was called to Rome to paint in the Sistine chapel the "Resurrection," now quite ruined by time and restorations. His most important works are the "Life of St. Francis" in the Church of Sta. Trinita at Florence (1485), the series already referred to in that of Sta. Maria Novella, and his last, the "Death of Santa Fina," in a chapel of the Duomo at San Gimignano, in which he was assisted by his son-in-law, Bastiano Minardi.

These compositions adequately represent his bias and style. He introduces architecture, classical ruins, ornamentation, and chiaroscuro figures, using gold sparingly for brilliancy with great skill and effect. In proportions, picturesque disposition of his figures and masses, broadly flowing lines, perspective, and animated variety in action and motive he is admirable. Then, too, he ennobles his personages in a material sense, just as Fra Angelico did in a spiritual point of view. With Ghirlandajo we are always in the best society. His taste in dress is not the least of his attractions. The coiffures of his females are particularly pleasing. Their beauty lies chiefly in the grace with which the artist disposes their well-drawn folds about the heads of his fair portraits. In all such matters he is inimitable. Without being profound he is always natural and pleasing. It is seldom that he probes the heart for its inmost emotions, for he is content to picture what lies more on the surface of life. But in his "Death of Santa Fina," a strictly historical composition, there is a touching simplicity of grief, and an artless arrangement of the personages, each perfectly characteristic and individualistic, with



free, dignified action, eloquent emotion, and warmer flesh tints than common.

Perhaps Ghirlandajo's strongest predilection was towards portraiture. He transforms his sacred histories into contemporary events; the incidents being faithfully recorded, the sacred personages ideally rendered, whilst the spectacle is made up from the familiar circumstances of his own times. Thus it happens that his fellow-citizens, in their proper likenesses and costumes and amid their own civic or domestic life, so conspicuously figure in his sacred compositions. He is exceedingly happy in rendering mental character. His portraits are quiet, dignified witnesses of the sacred mysteries, having no direct reference to them, but introduced probably from patriotic desire to connect the greatness and beauty of his native city with the glory and holiness of religion. They stand in detached groups, and from whatever motive introduced, they now are an interesting historical record. Among them we distinguish Agnolo Poliziano, several of the Tornabuoni, and other eminent citizens and among many fair ladies of Florence, the celebrated beauty, Ginevra de Benci, whose portrait Leonardo also painted. One of his earlier frescoes in the church of the Ogni Santi, in a chapel of the Vespucci family, the subject a Misericordia, contained the portrait of the Amerigo, who gave his name to our continent. In 1616 it disappeared under a coat of whitewash. David and Benedetto, the brothers of Domenico, were painters likewise, chiefly as assistants to him, and although clever do not call for more particular mention.

Domenico's favorite pupil was Minardi, whom he distinguished by painting his portrait as the youngest and handsomest of the three Magi. He imitated Ghirlandajo, was

weak in color, heavy in design, but with a decidedly devotional feeling. Few of his pictures are preserved. In company with Domenico he worked in that quaint old town, San Gimignano, which, with its lofty, frowning towers, castellated walls, venerable cathedral, and mediæval palaces, so haughtily perched on its mountain site; its dormant streets, and stern, ascetic isolation, carries the traveller vividly back to the times of the belligerent republics; — times when, mortal enemies within eyegance on every side, each citizen's daily duty was to guard, to fight, and to pray. It is rich in the remains of olden art, for, small as it ever was, it had a large heart and a cultivated taste. The venerable Duomo is still alive with the memories of Simone Martini, Taddeo di Bartolo, Benozzo Gozzoli, and Domenico Ghirlandajo, beside a host of lesser artists, all of whom, in this retired spot, with but few witnesses of their labors, worked with the same conscientious regard to religion and art as they did in the capitals of Italy with the world looking on. Though San Gimignano is time-battered, decrepit and poverty-stricken, it still breasts modernism with a brave front, warning off all innovation on its antiquity; content to exist as a relic of the Past and a shrine of religious art by which the outside world may yet profit.

## CHAPTER X.

Byzantine and Mediæval Landscape Art. Classical, Chinese, and Indian. Analogy between them. Character and Degree of its Progress in Italy. The qualities of Modern Landscape. Note on Giovanni Sanzio's Poem on Art. Special Successes of the Old Masters. Masterly Treatment of the Landscape by Titian and Correggio. Gentile da Fabriano, 1370-1450, the Sensuous. His Landscape. Benozzo Gozzoli, 1424-1485. His Campo Santo Frescoes. Pinturicchio, 1454-1515. His Frescoes at Siena. Assisted by Designs of Raphael.

It was not until naturalism had taken root in Italian painting that the landscape began to be cultivated, and then only as an accessory to superior motives. Indeed, while gold backgrounds lasted it could have no legitimate being. Distance, ærial effects, and perspective were incompatible with metallic surfaces and reflected lights. Fresco painting in some degree admitted of landscape, from its peculiar properties of light and color, which often suggested distance and ærial perspective, when even they were not technically sought for or understood. We commonly find that while the Giotteschi profusely introduced into painting architecture with rich meaning and from direct study, the landscape continued to retain the same hard, conventional aspect which it had in Byzantine art, and which, in turn, it had inherited from classical painting. The inattention or ignorance of all nations in this department seems to have generated like results. There is a striking resemblance between the style of landscape in Japanese and Chinese art and the frescoes and mosaics of Greece and Rome. In each, the same absence of perspective

and proportion, like truncated mountains, monotonous rocks, and impossible vegetation; in fine, the suggestion and not the semblance of things. Rarely in classical art do we perceive any indications of a better understanding of the features of the landscape.

It is the same with the Byzantines. Their mountains, broken up by glacier-like chasms, are heavy, hard, dark-brown masses, of which rocks are titanesque fragments, stones irregular circles, the ground a simple preparation of pure green or pale brown, and vegetation rootless, shapeless spots of simple colors, the whole without perspective or foreshortening, as flat as can be, affording no adequate foothold for the figures, which threaten to pitch forward from their treacherous foundations or to be overwhelmed by them. Nothing short of the design of mere savages can be ruder. Now and then there is a slight escape from this uniform impotence, more in motive than execution, in the lavish and loving introduction of flowers in the foreground, done with minute care, and evidently copied from nature,—a practice seldom indulged in by the Giotteschi, but very popular among the naturalistic painters in progressive excellence, until it reached its most finished and attractive aspect at the hands of Raphael and his contemporaries. So, too, in rare instances, there are indications, as in a Triptych of the twelfth century containing the “Wanderings of the Israelites in the Wilderness,” of a feeling for perspective and effects attainable only through gradations of color, correct proportions, and the substitution of a painted sky for the golden background, which is retained in the remaining compositions of this beautiful and curious specimen of Byzantine art.\*

\* Pl. A, fig. 1, the part referred to is not produced in the engraving.

As Giotto received landscape so he transmitted it through his entire succession, excepting, if we credit contemporary critics, Stefano and in some degree Antonio Veneziano and the Lorenzetti, who were in advance of their brethren. But there was no general improvement until Masolino, Masaccio, and their contemporaries, though with some lingering touches of the past, did away finally with golden skies, and began to substitute scientific progress for conventional forms. Their immediate advance was in perspective, and their preference ran to architecture. Yet there were artists like Gentile da Fabriano, who continued the partial use of gold in his backgrounds with some discrimination, as in the gradino of his "Epiphany" in the Florentine Academy, where we see the sun in golden relief throwing rays of light of the same material on the distant hill-tops, illuminating the landscape with great brilliancy. But more correct principles soon prevailed, although Botticelli and others continued occasionally to use it in hair, vegetation, and architecture; and it was not until almost a century later that in glories, as with the rest of high lights, it was wholly superseded by color.

Classical art never had any landscape proper. Paganism with all its spirit of pantheism was dead to the beauty of the natural world. Even Christianity was slow in taking note of its manifold attractions. Indeed, as long as theology swayed art, the love of the landscape was as foreign to Christian as to Pagan taste, and its manifestations were equally crude in both. When, however, naturalistic progress began, art commenced to associate with its higher forms the profusion and variety of the inferior world, that so lavishly lay open to its choice. Thus it happened that a love of the landscape for its

own sake was gradually induced by the appropriate connection first established by the more religious artists between the beautiful things of nature in a symbolical sense and the divine expressions of sentiment in human or celestial form. From this it was but a step for art to seize upon the landscape world as a special domain, and to depict its features from love of it as being with man a portion of the common gift of Creation. But under its best auspices in Italy it has always remained in the popular taste in a subordinate position to the human figure. Indeed this is its correct position, and in America we shall never know what high art is until we lose our exclusive fondness for the landscape. Nevertheless the prevailing deadness of the southern eye to the beauties of scenery seems the more strange to the northern mind inasmuch as nature everywhere invites to out-of-door life.

The first objects to benefit by the new study of nature were the smallest details and the broad masses of light and general lines of the landscape. Rocks and hills continued to retain much of their crude appearance. Especially, however, was the sky beautifully treated by the earlier masters of this bias, it being finely graduated from the zenith to the horizon in clear, natural, luminous tones of mingled blue and gray; shadowless it is true and with scarcely any suggestion of those infinite mysteries and disclosures of light and shade with which nature veils her works, and which are at once the aim, and despair of modern landscapists; but instead it was full of solemn quietude.\*

\* In this relation the following quotation from a poem by Giovanni Sanzio, the father of Raphael, is not without interest, as showing both the despair of the "quattrocentiste" painters in rendering that truth of nature which is the aim, and to a certain degree success, of our best landscapists, and the scientific problems of perspective, of foreshortening, &c., so difficult to the old



Motion, the forms of nature, the wondrous diversity of her unity, distance gradually melting into infinity, and suffused with golden and purple mists, or the silvery noon-tide sheen, and its quivering stillness, the inner sense of the landscape, with its universal heart, the mother of all matter, were unattempted; or if essayed, only in suggestive, broken, sharply defined masses and lines, analogous to the stammering speech of a child. Water was simply

masters, and which bounded their horizon of technical progress, though so familiar to every tyro in art of this age. The poem is rendered into English by James Dennistoun, Appendix 14, vol. ii., of his *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino*. It is a "Rhyming Chronicle" introducing a disquisition on the Painters and Painting of Sanzio's contemporaries, and he gives the highest praise to one whose influence on his own earlier works is just perceptible.

"Great the delight it gave him to admire  
Mantegna's wondrous paintings, splendid proofs  
Of his high genius. \* \* For than his  
No brighter banner waves, no name more known,  
Even of our glorious age. None is found  
In Italy or elsewhere, who so blends  
Art's many integrals in one fair whole," etc.

The part relating to the landscape reads thus :—

"Of painting (Perspective) 'tis  
Essential part, invention of our age.  
He who the subject fully comprehends  
May then detect a barrier overcome,  
And find an added grace. Where is the man  
Can counterfeit the ruby's brilliant tint,  
Or feign its splendor? Whose the skill  
To paint a sunrise, or to imitate  
The flowery herbage from a grassy bank  
Reflected in the lucid stream? Or who  
Can fashion beauteous nature's budding rose,  
And snow-white lily? Vain such efforts all!  
Yet painting may deceive the sense, and show  
A surface flat, in many places upheaved,  
Till duly ordered distance is expressed," etc.

It is but fair to state that Sanzio's verses are ruder than his pictures. Both, however, portray a thoughtful, refined mind.

a glassy surface of low-toned color with mathematically calculated reflections, or with monotonous ripples and gun-elastic waves. Trees stood stiffly straight, accurately poised but rootless, on the earth, which had in it no nutriment for them, and ready to tumble over upon the faintest jar. Fore-shortening was still very imperfect. But it is unnecessary to point out more extensively what is obvious at a glance. Landscape, although gradually developing, had in the present period no independent, distinct existence, and was cultivated only in reference to other motives. Its most obvious features were imitated, improving slowly in the progress of design and knowledge of color. The love and comprehensiveness of the modern mind in this respect are widely different from the feeling of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. Yet the old masters, by their calm, elevated conception of the general phenomena of nature, and their sympathy with animal life, harmoniously subduing both to the loftier spirit of their themes, often succeed in producing more pleasurable and deeper emotions than obtain in most modern art. They now began to let the eye rove over wide expanses of country, diversified with hills, valleys, and plains, rivers winding through them, towns, hamlets, groves, roads, and bridges, clear skies and peaceful prospects, picturesquely and at times quaintly composed; cities and houses in brilliant red or delicate pink, seemingly for the pleasure taken in those colors, while the foregrounds abound with minute objects delineated with a fidelity and beauty that wins for them the admiration even of our critical age. In Paolo Ucello, Piero della Francesca, and Fra Filippo we trace a close observation and careful study of animal traits and many of the features of the landscape, with the interblending of technical error, which marks a transition and growing period. There was, however, no

perfect development of it until the masterly witchery of color of Titian and Correggio, united to their force of design and penetration into the secrets of its effects, gave to it a beauty and dignity as a whole which still remain marvels of artistic success.

A century before them there was an artist whose delight in nature was equal to theirs, with a like delight in color, and, for his time, as much skill in its use. Indeed, Gentile da Fabriano in this respect was the precursor of the Venetian school, and, next to Raphael, the pride of his native Umbria. He was born about 1370, and lived upwards of eighty years, enriched by means of his profession, and held in great honor to the last of his long career. Very few of his numerous paintings now exist, and very little personal information in regard to him has descended to us. He is reported to have written a work on art. But his pictures are an autobiography in themselves. As Michel Angelo truly said of them, they assimilate with his name, and when we regard them, Gentile himself appears to us as the embodiment of the chivalry and beauty of life. Refined, sensuous joy, noble manners, in delicacy and purity equal to Fra Angelico, but without a grain of asceticism or attempt at spirituality in the sense of the latter, more ease and animation, great warmth of color, always cheerful and serene, sympathizing with the true and beautiful in nature, drawing forth her smiles, having a virtuous faith in the good things of earth, — these are some of the attributes which give to his pictures the flavor of a terrestrial paradise. Happily uniting the sensuousness of Greek art with the purity of Christian feeling, the result was a poetical atmosphere alike free from sensuality and mysticism.

Gentile's fancy is singularly rich, inventive, and melodramatic. He touches nothing, however commonplace in

itself, but to inspire it with the spirit of life and beauty. Castagno makes existence serious and suffering. Gentile vitalizes it with manifold charms, which, giving a glow of joy to all he depicts, exhilarate our senses like the melodies of noble music. Of his chief composition, the "Adoration of the Magi," in 1846 Lord Lindsay remarks "The coloring has much faded." Alas! cruel hands have since invaded with remorseless brush the rich, delicate, well-harmonized tints that characterized Gentile's virgin touch, and replaced them in great part by tones not properly his; hard and opaque, but attractive to the uneducated eye from their brightness and newness.\* Some of the smaller pictures above, those grand prophets and fairy-like angels, and the predella, have partially escaped this barbarism, and also the fruits and flowers on the sides, which he was wont to paint as with the hand of nature herself, and with a truthful fondness that makes one's heart leap towards him.

The landscape of this picture is filled with everything pleasant to gaze upon. A magnificent sweep of sunlit hills and distant, peaceful sea, whitened by the sails of commerce, flourishing cities, and signs of stirring, prosperous life, occupy the background. Far off begins the journey of the Magi, whose retinue winds among forests, flowers, trees laden with luscious fruits, a country literally overflowing with "milk and honey," until it reaches the foreground, where the kings dismount before the Virgin mother to offer their gifts and to worship. They have come in truly royal guise, as Christian knights, bringing with them even those mediæval appendages of rank, dwarfs, monkeys, and dogs, horses magnificently caparisoned, a

\* The companion altar-piece, by Fra Angelico, the "Descent from the Cross," a noble composition, has experienced even worse treatment. It now shines forth in all the cold glitter and polish of decorated coach-panelling.

train of animals laden with presents, and comely young men. But the eye centres on those handsome kings, resplendent in attire, whose pride of rank and condition fits them most gracefully, and whose countenances as they adore the infant Saviour are lighted up as by a prophetic consciousness of the incoming triumph of the new faith thus ushered upon earth through the instrumentality of heaven. Their attendants gaze curiously upon the spectacle, half wondering at the homage done by the great and wise to a poverty-born babe, and yet awed by the sympathy which makes even the brutes acknowledge their Lord, and the very stars of heaven to be obedient guides to the humble spot where the manger-cradle held the Son of God. Like Simone Martini, a kindred spirit, he bestows upon the Madonna a train of lovely females. Sacred tradition calls one of these Mary Salome; she who waited upon the Virgin at the birth of her divine son, and vowed to attend upon them both as long as either lived.

All Gentile's women are chastely beautiful; fascinating without allurements to the grosser senses, healthfully and perfectly organized, not afraid of their own instincts, having no need of penance, pure and happy, fit companions for his noble men; both sexes, such as we can imagine human beings might be, whose lives, untarnished by inherited vice or disease, are strictly consistent with the laws of Providence.

Gentile is lavish of ornament, prodigal in gold, pure, brilliant, and sweet in color, and strong also, using it with meaning, and in every touch showing a susceptible and highly cultivated nature. Modern taste and practice in pigments condemns much of his style. But its picturesqueness and geniality are most winsome. Yet the influence of the Giotteschi, in his long, narrow eyes and other peculiarities



of design, is perceptible, and natural also, for he was educated by them. His types of characters are wholly ideal. There is no attempt at portraiture. His Madonnas are slightly weak, but they are endowed with the same graceful sweetness which belongs to the earlier ones of Raphael. Indeed Raphael borrowed somewhat from Gentile, for he was greatly fascinated by him, and when a youth went expressly to Fabriano to study his "Coronation of the Virgin."

In 1418 Gentile was at Venice, where he painted a historical composition, now destroyed, in the Great Council Hall, which was so much admired as to procure for him a yearly pension and the distinguished privilege of wearing the habit of a Venetian senator. He became intimate with Giacomo Bellini, and stood godfather to his son Gentile. At Orvieto he was honored with the title of "Magister Magistorum." By the order of Martin V. he began three frescoes in Rome, which he did not live to finish. They were completed by Pisanello, of Verona, whose style resembles his. Unfortunately, all of his frescoes have perished. By a contemporary writer and critic he was ranked as the greatest artist of the day. But while placing him at the head of refined sensuism, in which school he shines as does Fra Angelico in that of spiritual apprehension, or Masaccio in naturalistic truth, he is not to be ranked above them or even Fra Filippo. His winsome qualities lie in not deep but dainty idealization, attractive coloring, and fertile invention. Full of gentle blood himself, he infuses it into his creations. Out of this world he recasts one of perpetual summer and sunshine, lifts us above the prosaic realism of life into delicious dream-land, in which we do not see the familiar, careworn, passion-torn faces of our friends, but their better angels with shining looks and sen-



suous joy. In fine, he personifies the innocent illusions of youth, and fills our minds with sweet thoughts and pretty fancies, making nature alive, not as with the Greek, with pantheistic creations, but with the happy consciousness of the likeness of its Creator. Be happy is his motto. Such is the conception we gather from his very few remaining works, which may not even represent his entire capacity.

In close sympathy with him is Benozzo Gozzoli, (1424-1485,) a Florentine. Together with Cosimo Rosselli his early style was formed under Fra Angelico. But Cosimo soon went over to the school of Masaccio, while Gozzoli, although sufficiently sympathizing with his master to endow his works painted under him with genuine religious feeling, yet is better known by a wholly independent style. Vasari pertinently says of him, that he spent his entire life in honorable works. This no one will doubt who has seen his extensive labors in fresco at Pisa, Florence, Rome, San Gimignano, and numerous other localities in Umbria and Tuscany. Throughout them all there is the same overflowing joy in the natural world. Whatever can enliven its aspect and make it more delightful he lavishly introduces. Architecture made up of long vistas of columns, noble arcades, towers, and domes, displaying at times fantastic "tours de force," in the elaborate and mixed Gothic and classical elements then in fashion, and filled with precious details of sculpture, richly designed and decorated doors, windows, porticos, and balconies, in wonderful variety, crowds his works. He loves varied, animated composition. Picturesque beauty and vivid life are his aims. He peoples his paintings with numerous spectators, relevant or not to the scene, and follows the example of the earlier masters in including in one composition several distinct moments of time, and repetitions of the chief actors under

different phases of events. Thus he often mixes several pictures into one, and not always in such sequence that the eye can readily separate them; content, apparently, when by richness and variety he can most delight and astonish. As late as 1459, in his "History of the Magi," in the chapel of the Ricardi palace, Florence, he uses gold in relief and otherwise profusely. He also repeats the error of Paolo Ucello in making a horse lift both legs of the same side at once, and in other matters displays a curious mixture of oversight and attention to common facts of nature. Some of his foreshortening is excellent, and his groups of angels wonderfully rich in feeling and color. They have better relief than those of Fra Angelico, more strength of design, as fine movement, superior drapery, and in expression partake closely of the pure sentiment of his master. His costumes are very rich. He has not the correctness, force, nor dignity of Ghirlandajo. Neither does he arrive at his graphic expression of individual character. But he has more movement, variety, and copiousness of invention. Occasionally he is timid, weak, or hasty, but commonly very successful in grouping and the interposition of accessory events. He combines much of Gentile and Ghirlandajo, standing half-way between them; is fond of historical composition, inserts the portraits and costumes of contemporaries, likes to record every-day human nature in its pleasantest aspects, amassing every idea and object that can heighten effect, not partial to simplicity or quietude, and is ever a long-winded, brilliant narrator, sparing no pains to amuse and interest. At one and the same time we find him gay and dignified, whimsical, capricious, fantastic, and sentimental, abounding in love, purity, and faith, not blind to the evil side of humanity, quite capable of depicting strife and crime and the emotions of jealousy, fury, and

revenge. But such scenes are rare, and used as allegory or as striking contrasts. Nowhere is sensualism discernible. Even his "Temptation of Joseph" is so delicately given in his Campo Santo series that it requires some pains to pick out the group. He states the fact, but divests it of criminal warmth in telling. So, too, in the unmerited banishment of Hagar. Several incidents of her history are condensed into one scene. Sarah reproaches Abraham in the presence of her neighbors for his passion for the bond-maiden, whose youthful charms are in eloquent contrast with her wrinkled, spare countenance. The spectators evidently sympathize in her husband's taste. He has the air of a hen-pecked man, and looks upon his wife with great awe. Sarah, infuriated at the calmness with which her jealousy is received, — the picture shifting scenes like a Punch-and-Judy show, — seizes Hagar by the hair, and with a vigor not warranted by her looks scourges her rival furiously, who on her knees with uplifted hands screams for pity, her dishevelled hair flowing wildly over her shoulders, and her dress falling down in front disclosing ripe beauties that still further exasperate her mistress. Abraham looks on in piteous, helpless reproach, afraid to stir in behalf of his concubine. Soon she is seen walking away with her son, faint and despairing, sinking down to die in the far-off wilderness, unobservant of the angel of the Lord now coming to her aid.

In another of his series of Bible Histories he perpetrates a sly joke at the expense of the female sex. It occurs in the "Drunkenness of Noah," perhaps his best work. Note the Flora-like grace, evidently studied from the antique, of the movement of the woman on the left, bearing a basket of luscious grapes on her head; the jovial and elastic action of the man treading down the fruit in the wine-vat;

the naïve fright of the Cupid-like infants in front at the playful attack of a pet dog ; the enticing beauty of the young women who give Noah to drink of the new made wine in golden vessels, and, better still, the conception of the final scene, when the aged inebriate lies in brutal, helpless nakedness upon the earth. Ham and his companions scoff at him. Shem and Japhet, with their eyes turned aside, bring a garment to cast over their father. An aged female, his wife perhaps, bends sorrowfully over him, her agony at his degradation obscuring his nudity ; while a little farther off stands a young and curious daughter of Eve, pretending to be shocked and to turn away, but slyly looking on through her fingers with which she feigns to cover her eyes, wantonly laughing the while at the patriarch's debasement.

Gozzoli painted twenty-four of the compartments in the Campo Santo, occupying him sixteen years. With due allowance for his technical inferiority, there is much in his compositions that resembles Paul Veronese : the same pleasure in festivals, music, aristocratic company, and marriage scenes, even to the arrangement of his tables, architecture, treatment of light, fondness for dogs ; and he anticipates him in the introduction of kittens hungrily scratching at the table-linen to be noticed. The introduction of low incidents of this character is exceedingly rare in Florentine painting, in sacred subjects, though common enough in German art, from which, with many other characteristics, it passed into Venetian. Tintoretto becomes vulgarly offensive, by making a cat and dog conspicuously quarrelling over a stolen bone in the foreground of his "Last Supper."

The landscape, however, is Benozzo Gozzoli's favorite field. His are the opposite of Gentile's flowing, wave-like

lines, which so pleasantly lead the vision into his broad and varied backgrounds. Gozzoli, on the contrary, indulges in constant surprises; sharp, broken lines of mountains, hills, and precipitous valleys; perpendicular lines everywhere, suggestive of height; tall and straight trees, pines and cypresses especially, without root; rocks, craggy, truncated, and Giottesque; a plentiful sprinkling of cities, castles and hamlets; an aversion to water; partiality to a rough, upland country, throughout which with open hand he scatters birds of the richest plumage, particularly peacocks and parrots, and domestic and herbivorous animals of all varieties, and children in frolicsome companionship. His instincts are sensuous, but innocent and gay. They have no affinity with mysticism or asceticism; no inner sense to fathom; but seize upon the scenic elements of life and present them in a natural and captivating form. Gentile gives us to drink of the luscious vintage of Spain; Gozzoli of the brisk wines of France.

Somewhat later, but of a like bias towards the landscape and ornamentation and of a similar tone of mind, is Bernardino Pinturicchio (1454-1515), born and educated at Perugia, though ranking with the Sienese. Among the Tuscans he was the last artist of note who used gold profusely in his draperies and ornaments, imitating Gentile by giving it relief. Richness, elaborate finish, brilliancy, the introduction of beautiful birds and graceful animals, the joy of nature, luxury, grace, and elegance characterize him. Vasari has studiously depreciated his style and character, and would have it believed that he died of chagrin at the accidental discovery of five hundred golden ducats in a rotten chest, which he had peevishly insisted should be taken out of the room allotted to him in the monastery of St. Francis, at Siena, where he was engaged in painting a "Na-



tivity," and which otherwise he might have appropriated. His paintings indicate any spirit but that of avarice and dishonesty, and from the testimony of Tizio, a contemporary, we learn that his death was hastened by the carelessness or cruelty of relations, who, when he was ill, left him alone and helpless in his house. Possibly this neglect, inexcusable at that, had been provoked by the not uncommon infirmity of an impetuous, exacting disposition. But nothing worse need be credited of the friend and companion of Raphael.

He had his moments of happy inspiration, and also of degenerate, mannered execution, the result of haste and exhaustion. His figures are tall, but not awkward. Grace and tenderness particularly distinguish him. Perugino furnished him with models for his angels, but his Madonnas have a loveliness wholly his own. Primarily he manifested much of the pure Umbrian feeling. His faces are sweetly refined, though without much strength of character. Still he was esteemed in portraiture. The landscape is, however, his most interesting field; his architecture and accessories being grandly cast and highly adorned.

The Library of the Duomo at Siena contains a series of paintings by him in fresco, representing the principal events in the life of Pius II. (*Æneas Sylvius*), done from 1502 to 1504, by order of Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini, afterwards Pius III., by whose family he was much patronized. They are admirably adapted to the surrounding architecture, and are as fresh in color and in as fine condition as if done but yesterday. It has always been a question to what extent Pinturicchio was indebted to Raphael for their design and composition. Without rivalling Raphael, both having been trained under common artistic auspices, there is sufficient affinity of feeling between the two to har-



monize their works in no ordinary degree. The drawings of Raphael of this period are superior to these works, yet they have sufficient semblance to them to countenance those critics who are too eager to depreciate the elder and inferior artist for the benefit of the younger, who has no need of any dubious testimony to add to his fame. They seem to be really the work of Pinturicchio, assisted somewhat but influenced greatly by the superior knowledge and taste of his young friend. Their most obvious characteristics, brilliancy, the method of execution, general style and feeling, belong to the former ; while in the graceful disposition of the numerous figures, each a study by himself, a crowd but without confusion, and the admirable unity of the picturesque scenes, there is an unmistakable Raphaelesque sentiment, evincing how gracefully and generously the older could adopt the better inspirations of the younger painter.

## CHAPTER XI.

Naturalistic, Religious Painting. Rise of the Classical Paduan School. Squarcione, 1396-1474. Andrea Mantegna, 1430-1506. Venetian and Tuscan Coloring; the Meaning and Spirit of each. Sensuous and Purists' Styles and Aims in Color. Nature the Universal "Bible" of Inspiration. Revelation the Special do. Causes of the Decay of Purism and Asceticism. The Difficulties of Religious Art. How to view and interpret it. Florence cosmopolitan in Art. Umbria mystic. Alunno, 1458-1492. Fiorenzo, 1450. Bonfigli, 1420-1496. Giovanni Santi, the Father of Raphael. Francesco Francia, 1450-1517. His Sons. Perugino, 1446-1524. Lorenzo di Credi, 1459-1531. Fra Bartolomeo, 1468-1517. Alberto Albertinelli, 1475-1520? Francesco Granacci, 1477-1544. Series of School Artists.

It has been shown that the artists of the direct succession of Masaccio painted religious subjects rather from external pressure than internal conviction. Treating them historically, sensuously, or naturally, their poetry of expression did not soar above the atmosphere of earth. Intellect colored by sense guided their art, the same as the mystics sought through the subjection of the material to the spiritual to elevate the spectator into supernal scenery and emotion. Saints in art, as in every other pursuit, are the exceptional class. Not that the numerous others are specially sinners, but worldly ways are more intelligible to them. Beside, their close study of nature tended to withdraw them more and more from mystic thought and ascetic habits; so that the religious sentiment had now become a secondary influence.

There was, however, another phase of painting, contemporary with theirs, basing its technical expression upon the

new progress, but in feeling more akin to the older lyrical school, and deriving its inspiration exclusively from the Church. Before bringing its artists into view, did scope permit, it would be a pleasant task to wander awhile from Etruscan ground to the north and east, and investigate the methods and motives of the equally interesting painters of Lombardy and the Venetian States of the same epoch, parallel as they were in progressive development, though not always in time with the Tuscans. Indeed, there was so much interchange between them of works and ideas, the artists of each passing to and fro, that the history of one locality has a general resemblance to its neighbor, the difference being rather technical than mental. As we go northward we find the counterpart in feeling and thought to Etruscan art; not an equality in names, as a whole; for Ambrogio Borgognone, the Vivarini, Lorenzo Costa, Carlo Crivelli, Ercole Grande, Mazzolino, and Melozzo da Forlì,\* are scarcely to be placed upon the same level as Fra Angelico, Gentile da Fabriano, Masaccio, Fra Filippo, Luca Signorelli, and Domenico Ghirlandajo, not to mention the greatest of the Tuscans, the immortal trio, Raphael, Leonardo, and Michel Angelo. Still, for a proper understanding of all the elements that now entered into the progress of painting, a brief reference is necessary to the classical feeling, so largely developed by Francesco Squarcione (1396–1474), of Padua, who was the first painter of note that made antique sculpture his model, in preference to direct

\* Melozzo, however, stands almost by himself for his time, (1472), when his principal work was executed in the Church of the S. S. Apostoli, at Rome, of which some fragments have been preserved. Agincourt, plate 142, engraves the figure of the Almighty, and some angels, which are grandly conceived, with full, graceful modelling, an aim at true perspective, a beauty of attitude, and softness of expression that are quite like Correggio himself. His treatment of drapery, which is cumbersome and unmeaning, is much inferior to his nude figures.

study of nature, though he recommended to his scholars special attention to it to avoid the rigidity of mere copying. He considered, however, that the antique was the embodied ideal of the real, and was so enamored of its study that he went to Greece, and travelled all over Italy, collecting statuary, and making drawings of what could not be removed, which collection he established at Padua as an academy of design. It grew rapidly into repute, and attracted to him so many scholars, more than a hundred at one time, that he was called the "Father of Painters." Popes and princes greatly honored and encouraged him. His own pictures are extremely rare. His predilection, as may be supposed, was for mythological subjects and classical motives, and in his severity of outline and decided feeling for idealization he resembles Botticelli. But too exclusive study of sculpture, through his influence, as a basis of design in painting, led many into exaggerated sharpness of contours, heaviness and rigidity in draperies, excessive clinging to the form to mark more prominently the limbs, or to frequent hard, oblique, small folds, which mar the general sweep and lose the grand lines in a multitude of short ones. Beside the statuesque character of their pictures, the artists of this tendency also showed their preference for classical models in their ornamentation, delighting in festoons of fruits and flowers, bas-reliefs, and the architectural embellishments and subjects of antiquity, often incongruously blended with Christian topics out of mere wantonness of design.

Andrea Mantegna (1430-1506) was the greatest of the classically trained painters. He worked chiefly at Mantua, attracted thither by its duke, Gonzaga. Precision, sharpness, richness, at times a slight admixture of gold, deep color, marvelous finish, severity of design, dignity and intensity of expression, considerable beauty but

not equal grace, refined feeling, much overborne, however, by his technical force, distinguish the best manner of Mantegna. He is fertile and fanciful; sometimes grand, always painstaking, not free, neither sensuous, sensual, nor spiritual, but purely intellectual, richly elaborating and decorating when in harmony with his motive, and at other times simple in style, manifesting deep emotion, and even winsome and tender, as in his masterpiece, the "Madonna della Vittoria" of the Louvre, in which he represents his patron Gonzaga kneeling in adoration to the Virgin for his victory over Charles VIII. of France. For variety of invention, beauty of form, and exquisite finish, there are in the same Museum two pictures of his of an allegorical character even more noticeable. But those which most graphically display his classical proclivities are the "Triumphs of Cæsar," the cartoons of which are now preserved at Hampton Court, England. His conception of the brilliant, varied spectacle is natural and vivid; the design elegant, and the knowledge displayed of the accessories of pagan ovations remarkable. Indeed it is the actual triumph of Mantegna; a favorable contrast in true feeling to the bastard classicalisms of the French school of the same tendency.

Form, design, symmetrical grouping, and stately or natural composition are the principal external elements of painting in the Paduan and Tuscan schools, color being subordinate, though its value was well recognized, but under different aspects and governed by different principles than those which obtained among the Venetians. In Italy the latter were the earliest to use oil colors, on account of their superior adaptation to those effects which were their peculiar aim. Their splendid success blinds most spectators to the motives which governed the management of colors

among their southern neighbors. However much we may admire Venetian hues, we must not forget that they had small connection with the inner sense of art; that they were an external effect, recognizable but seldom in nature, and then under peculiar atmospherical or conventional conditions. Venetian coloring has its origin in a taste for magnificence, ripened under congenial skies and strengthened by intimate relations with the Orient. The Venetians loved splendor. They sought to idealize color; the aim of the Tuscans was truth of character. The Venetians were warm, but also a grave, dignified, astute, festive, unfathomable race; jealous, ambitious, devotional, and vindictive; casting over social life an inexorable statecraft which merged individuality into a political mechanism. Thus the tone of Venice, unlike that of Florence, in religion, politics, commerce, and art, is uniform. We recall the greatness of Venice, but scarcely remember her great men. The names of those of Florence are household words throughout the civilized world, and we know her greatness chiefly through their strong and varied individuality. In the former, mind and feeling were fused into one mould; in the latter, they took many and varied shapes. If it be objected that Titian is as great a representative name in painting as Raphael or Correggio, we admit it. But Titian is the culmination of the Venetian taste for color. He represents the tone of his country in its completest development. His standard of perfection is the test of success to all of his school. The great Tuscans, on the contrary, each out of his own soul created a diversified and independent art-world unto himself. Hence, confining our view to color, we perceive how local and characteristic it was of the Venetians as a race, while among the Tuscans it was as varied as were the individual proclivities of their leading artists.



We cannot now enter upon a complete examination of Venetian coloring. It is enough to point out its uniform expression, æsthetical character, legitimately the offspring of art, grave and solemn rather than lightsome and joyous, born to riches and dignity, and its typical connection with the homogeneous policy of the state. Its foundation is in an innate passion for warm tones, deep shadows, and sparkling play of light. In its luminous fusion of tints, subtle gradations, powerful yet harmonious contrasts, force of projection, imperceptible outlines lost in the sleight of color, festive or serious aspects, rarely descending to absolute sensualism nor arriving at full spirituality, always clinging to its peculiar choice of light, its oligarchical features and semi-oriental feeling for the alternations of deep repose or strong action, above all in its magic unity of tone, it has a fascination as strong and mysterious as the wave-worn Queen of the Adriatic herself. Indeed it is the romance of color, as the Greek sculpture is the idealism of form; each perfected by the cunning of art upon the plane of earthly sympathies and understandings.

Analogous to the power Venetian coloring has over the senses, the simple, positive, crystalline tints of the Tuscan purists exercise sway over the spiritual faculties, on account of their peaceful, joyous, and religious suggestiveness. It is unfortunate that so few of the works of either the Giotteschi or their successors in devotional sentiment have descended to our times in their original purity. But when we meet with them, we find that their principles of coloring, harmonizing as they do so beautifully with the motives of the composition, were not only the instinct but the results of thoughtful consideration of the artist. Purity and holiness of sentiment sought expression in clearness and brightness of color. Hence, in part, the long-continued

use of tempera, which was as peculiarly adapted to the effects sought by the religious artists as was oil for the Venetians. In proportion as Beauty assumes sensuous or sensual feeling, its expression in color deepens and darkens, for it seeks a grosser incarnation in material, and relies more upon contrasts of lights and shadows, warmth and fusion of tints, and the subtleties of imitation, elevated or common according to the quality of the inspiration, than upon the power of symbolism or the suggestiveness of etherealized pigments. The hues of Simone Martini, Starina, Sano di Pietro, Lorenzo di Credi, Francesco Francia, and their brethren, are not accidents of art any more than the chaste folds of their draperies or the decorous attitudes of their holy personages. And this is the grand distinction between the conflicting principles. All other than religious art—we mean its mystical, ecstatic aspect—addresses itself to the tangible, substantial present. Realism loves the Appearances of Things,—Humanity and Nature as related to Earth: Mysticism strives to penetrate the Life beyond the grave.

Naturalism has ever before it an attainable, perceptible standard and inspiration. Dealing with men and things, it need but cleverly imitate and record to attain truth and beauty. Nature is to it the universal Bible. Consequently, if the artist accurately designs and colors her patterns, our pleasure is proportionate to his skill in counterfeiting her realism. Study qualifies both him and the critic to intelligently pronounce upon her varied truths. His art being based upon science, we test his work by its laws. No fear through them of mistaking a cabbage for a lily, or a crow for a nightingale. He stakes his reputation upon creating out of formless, soulless vehicles an appearance so life-like that our highest pleasure shall lie in its truthful beauty.

“How like!” “How true!” “How well he comprehends nature!”—such is the guerdon he covets.

Revelation is the particular Bible. While all persons can feel and understand, in proportion to their cultivation, the world of facts and its tangled destinies, interests, passions, and fallacies, in short, the language of the external senses, comparatively few qualify themselves to interpret the signs of spiritual life. It may be and may not be. It is far off. A dense mist shrouds it. It is a dogma, a speculation; a thing of *to-morrow*: at the surest, a vague handwriting upon the wall which prophets alone can read. Among the many false, how to know the true?

Again, the age of parables, mysticism, and aceticism has irrevocably passed away. Modernism has no liking for the dry bones of theology. The kingdom of Dogma, ruled by the tyrant Infallibility, is terribly shaken and broken by Scepticism, the pioneer of Progress. Though Faith be now somewhat loose, it is in the Hope of more Light. Then, too, we have our own race of martyrs. In spirit the same, though in life not like those men and women who so long ago edified Christians by their holy lives and cruel deaths. Much good have they won to the world. The Church called them saints, and exalted them to hierarchichal dignity. But in ceasing to be human they have become abstractions; virtue, holiness, faith incarnated; the more remote from our humanity, the more difficult for us to *feel* their individuality. Apotheosis is ever a doubtful experiment upon influence over the heart. Men, to be moved, must have the example of beings like unto and near to themselves. Christianity was irresistible in its youth, because of its reality to the world, and the human individuality of its author. It appealed intelligently and forcibly to men from the plane of their own existence. Mediæval Chris-

tianity, and in consequence its art, was strong to move in the degree it realized to believers this sentiment. It was the Man-Christ that evoked the crusades and drew sympathetic tears and stern blows from iron-willed and iron-clad men. They believed that warrior-saints fought visibly for them. George and James came down more than once from heaven in their extremities to rescue and give them victory over the infidel. Upon a Woman-Saviour is now centred the feeling of the Catholic Church; — such as is left to it. Jesus upon the cross, once a dying, suffering man, and for us, has become the lifeless symbol of a mysterious creed. And Mary, as she ceases to be of those who were the last at the Crucifixion and the first at the Sepulchre, forsaking humanity and becoming the Queen of Heaven, putting on the robe of mysticism and the glories of divinity, equally loses her hold over those born of woman. In the degree that the natural association ceases and the doctrinal predominates in art, its force is weakened and it requires a peculiar religious training to make it effective.

In this age religious art is not popular, because it is received as an abstraction of the superstitious Past. That which we are now about to enter upon was its transition period, when it was still felt, understood, and cherished, but by a constantly diminishing audience. It always had peculiar difficulties to contend with, increasing with the spread of naturalism, the revival of classical taste and studies, and the diversion of the mind generally from its previous concentration upon the tenets of Christianity as interpreted by a not-to-be-questioned authority. In its highest office it sought to pictorialize the spiritual idea. Aspiring to this, it was compelled to be conventional, symbolical, and chiefly suggestive. Naturalism had its models and standard of perfection. Religious art was without an absolute

scale to appeal to for its technical guidance. Public faith, particular revelation — in itself always mystic and uncertain — the imagination of the artist, and ecclesiastical traditions and authority were its fountains of invention. The primary motives and ultimate aims being special, and in one sense antithetic to naturalistic art, it cared more for the utterance of its sentiment and less for technicalities. Fact and science were subordinated to spiritual motives. And only as the spectator comprehends this principle and makes it his standard of criticism has he the right clue whereby to get at its degree of success. The artist also must keep upon this platform, otherwise by too curiously searching out and cunningly imitating the external world, with hope to make its language the organ of spiritualities, he sinks religious art into mere naturalism, quenching its ethereality, making it of none effect, or, worse, anointing it with sensualism or ridicule.

In the infancy of painting and its first stages of progress, the religious artist, as we have seen, had with him the popular sympathy and understanding. Technically much had not been given to him, and of him much was not required. Devotion in him and his spectator ennobled both. But now scientific progress had raised up for him an invidious standard of comparison. He was required to suggest profound mysteries and spiritualized emotions in a less conventional guise, effecting a harmonious compromise between nature and idea, lest on the one hand he be considered ignorant and careless, and on the other unspiritual and irreligious. Besides this, he had at the best but imperfect vehicles wherewith to suggest glorified beings and celestial scenery. In every way, in attempting to soar he was momentarily liable, Icarus-like, to be precipitated broken-winged to the ground. We should not, therefore, too



readily complain of cold hues, if we find them pure, bright, and typical; for the artist could not well give the coveted warmth without over-risk of sensuousness. He did wisely in his temperance, hinting at what it is impossible not only to represent, but to have any tangible model to appeal to, seen of all men. Were it within mortal compass, he would rejoice in making heavenly garments and celestial forms glow as if with the light of the city that hath no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine upon it; for the glory of God lightens it, and "the Lamb is the light thereof," and all that "are saved shall walk in the light thereof." What wonder, that an artist whose soul glows with such a vision should mourn over his wretched pigments while using them as cunningly as he may; and filled with the consciousness of that ineffable glory, forget at times the unity of perspective, the strength of shadows, and the scientific distribution of light! Cannot we sometimes overlook a stammering tongue in the force of great truths? Are we not sometimes to sympathize with the finite in its search for the infinite?

Florence is distinguished above all other Italian cities for the variety of her art. She was comparatively free, commercial, and cosmopolitan, and, in consequence, eclectic in her intellectual tone, giving birth to and fostering extremes of style and sentiment. Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo were contemporaries within her walls. While the school of Masaccio was in its fullest vigor, a counterbalancing tendency of spiritual expression was maintained with much purity and genius by Perugino, Lorenzo di Credi, Fra Bartolomeo, and their scholars, who although having much in common in the principles of design and color with the naturalists, yet held firmly to religious inspiration.

This was still more emphatically true of the retired val-



leys and picturesque retreats of Umbria, which for ages had been the centre of deep, devotional feeling. Under its influence Assisi had become a venerated shrine of mystic painting. Nearly a century and a half previous Florence had consecrated to its pious adornment the genius of the greatest of the Giotteschi, including the great master himself and his teacher, Cimabue. The ascetic piety of St. Francis toned the entire region. Here he was born, and here his miracles had being. Here he raised the famed sanctuary which still bears his name and recalls so forcibly the time when the monastic orders dominated the religious world, and were also its best fruits. Saints had then more real power than kings. Isolated from the active world, intensely impregnated with the recollections of the golden period of monkism, the site of its most self-denying, holiest estate, surrounded by an atmosphere of enthusiastic, mystic pietism, constantly invigorated by the reputation of numerous miracles and wondrous legends of pictures that from time to time testified of their own accord to the truths of the holy Catholic religion which they illustrated, surrounded with the beautiful testimonials and eloquent lessons of those masters to whom faith in spiritualities was a living reality, amid placid, picturesque scenery inciting to contemplation, and those tender, fathomless longings to unravel the inner sense of things, which at some time or other of their lives beset all men, stimulating to rapt desire and exaltation of soul; it was but natural that such a country should become the focus of a further intense development of religious sentiment, infusing its peculiar spirit into every artist nurtured within its confines; a spirit all the deeper inasmuch as Siena was its close neighbor.

After the Giotteschi, the artists who first acquired local celebrity here were Niccola da Fuligno or Alunno (1458—

1492), Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, and Benedetto Bonfigli (1420–1496), of Perugia. They are serious, dignified, religious painters, Alunno being the best. His best points are the grace and innocence of his angels. In this connection, anticipating and leading the way to the school of Perugino and the first manner of Raphael, we find his father, Giovanni Santi, by vulgar usage corrupted into Sanzio, of Urbino. He was an accomplished, amiable gentleman, and a progressive artist, deeply imbued with the love of his profession. His works are rarely to be met with out of Umbria. They contain the germs of that winsome purity and tender seriousness which belong to Raphael's first manner. Indeed, they possess sufficient merit to warrant for their author a higher position than has been hitherto assigned him; his fame being so completely swallowed up by the world-wide reputation of his marvellous son. His pictures are conscientiously done, with great refinement of thought and manner, but little variety of invention, some stiffness of outline, weakness of color, but with pleasing expression, and perfect purity of Christian motive. Giovanni died in 1494, too early to triumph in his child's success, to whom he had imparted the rudiments of his art, and by whom he had been at times assisted in his own paintings, although not then eleven years old.

But the Umbrian sentiment finds in Francesco Francia, or Raibolini, of Bologna, (1450–1517,) a degree of perfection which no other artist of like proclivity of feeling surpassed or even equalled. At first he was a goldsmith and worker of metals. He did not turn his attention to painting until his forty-sixth year. However, he immediately gave such evidence of earnest feeling, beauty of coloring, and fineness of execution, joined to his previous knowledge of design, as to promptly acquire a distin-

guished reputation, and to attract and secure the friendship of Raphael, who began a correspondence with him, and some think even visited him at Bologna about 1506, leaving traces of his presence in the studio of his friend. In 1508, at his request, Francia sent him his portrait. In acknowledging the receipt of it, Raphael writes "it was so naturally and beautifully done that in looking upon it it was easy to fancy it to be himself, and to hear him converse."

Francia painted many portraits, in general resembling the Florentine manner of Raphael, which are now esteemed only second to those of that master. The flesh tints of the former in their carnations are more fresh and lively, and so is the blue of his landscapes. When Raphael finished his "St. Cecilia," he forwarded it to Francia, with the request that he would see it properly hung, and should there be any fault in it, to correct it. Higher testimony of confidence and appreciation one artist could not give another. In a sonnet addressed to his friend, Francia calls him the "Zeusi del nostro secolo." \* Yet our gossip, Vasari, so mistook the temper of both, that he would have us believe that Francia's vexation and chagrin were so great upon receiving a picture thus invidiously sent, so much superior to his own works, that he took it to heart, and died. There is merit enough in Francia to satisfy even a mind avid of fame; and not only the public of that day, but Raphael himself, had generously and zealously confessed it. Without being equal to his younger rival, in more than one point, he could stand a comparison with him. Besides, there were enough other causes to take off an infirm old man, without supposing him so destitute of magnanimity as to permit jealousy to sap the foundations of life, and finally extinguish it, there being

\* *Malvasia, Vite de Pittori Bolognese*, vol. i. p. 46. Bologna, 1678.

nothing in his general character to justify such an assertion, while the mutual regard of the parties altogether forbids it. Francia was of so gentle and obliging a disposition, and so charming in conversation, as to keep all about him in good-humor, and to dispel melancholy from the most down-hearted. These amiable characteristics of his temperament are everywhere perceptible in his pictures. Indeed, few if any artists have ever spread their charm of character more completely over their works than he. Every one loved him. Foreign cities and princes contested the privilege of pictures at his hand. In common with the religious masters of his time, he concentrates his talents upon a limited range of topics. And he is more conspicuous for simple dignity, purity, and depth, united to a winsome openness of manner, letting out his entire soul, with its virgin joys and thoughts, at one glance, than for breadth, variety or fertility. Evidently, too, he is more laborious than facile, ideal in his conceptions, and aiming at perfection in execution. His touch is peculiarly fine, and yet full of meaning. Eternal peace and joy, the beatific sense of the infinite, the transcendent bliss of perfect faith, characterize his sacred personages. His Madonnas are of a full, beautiful type, strictly ideal, graceful and womanly and yet purified from the infirmities of the flesh. He escapes the monotony and languor of Perugino, with whose general sentiment he has much in common. Francia has more nobility and sincerity of soul; consequently a greater elevation of character in his general pictorial types, though the best of Perugino's may be classed with his. One of his best compositions, now a greatly injured fresco in a small church at Bologna, is the "Marriage of St. Cecilia." In its extreme refinement, delicacy, and noble character of heads, well-chosen action, and entire unity of feeling, it

recalls another marriage, that of Eleonora of Portugal, done by Pinturicchio, but in part designed by Raphael. Francia's is superior in grace and repose, and is less ornate.

Francia never permits superfluous accessories and excessive ornamentation. His taste in this respect is classical and pure. Draperies, costumes, movement, and background are always in admirable harmony with his leading motive. With him, the landscape is truly charming; simple, strictly subordinate to the foreground, and full of clear, ethereal light, with delicate gradations of distance and aerial perspective. Unlike Leonardo and his school, he is sparing of minute details. A few well-chosen features suggest the variety of nature. His aim is repose. Not that he was incapable of dramatic vigor, or a sympathy with the more active phenomena of being. For he painted a forest on fire, out of which were rushing in terror a multitude of animals, — a rare and almost unexampled topic for an artist of his tone of mind, and to be compared only with the hurricane of Ambrogio Lorenzetti, mentioned by Ghiberti, attempted nearly two centuries before. Classical subjects also occasionally came within his scope, such as the "Lucretia" which he painted for one of the neighboring dukes. At present, beside his many sacred subjects, we have left only his beautiful portraits to attest his mastership. He had many scholars and imitators, though none to be classed with him. His cousin and sons, Giulio and Giacomo, did works which without the means of direct comparison have passed for his.

The most widely known of the Umbrians is Pietro Vannucci, (1446–1524,) born at Citta della Piève, generally called Perugino, a name derived from Perugia, where he finally established his studio. Few painters have a more universally spread reputation, and few have experienced







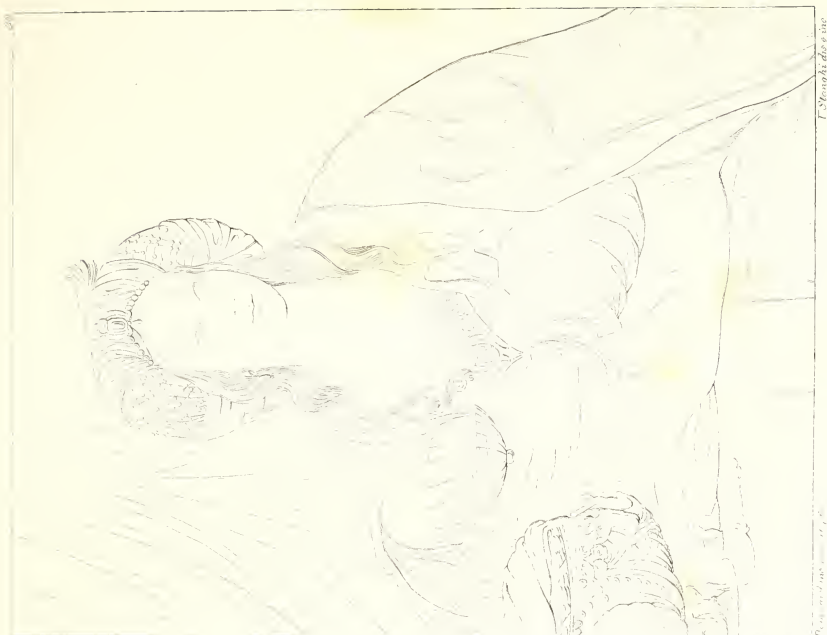


Figure 1. A seated figure, likely a deity or royal figure, wearing a tall, ornate headdress and a long, flowing robe. The figure is seated on a throne or similar structure, with a large, draped cloth or garment covering the lower part of the body. The drawing is framed by a simple border.

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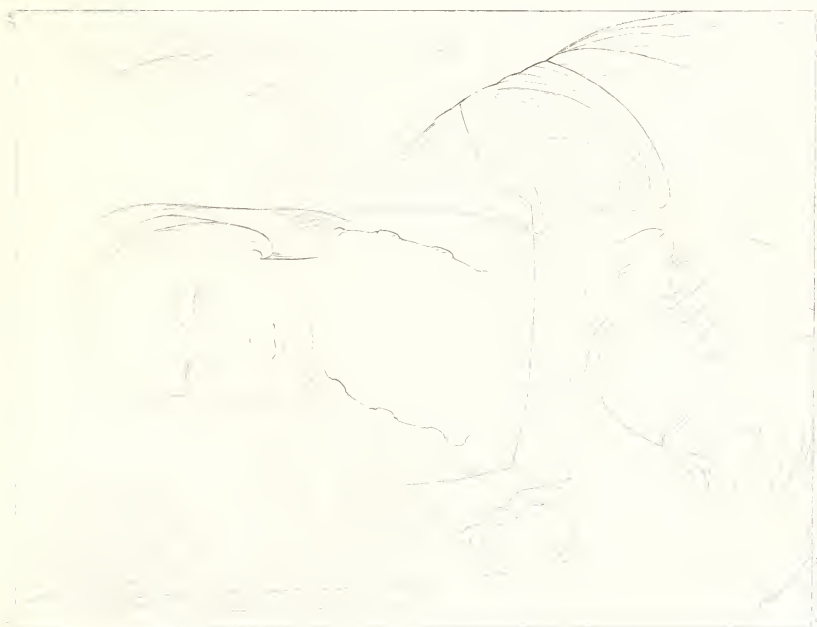


Figure 2. A seated figure, similar to the one above, but with a different headdress and robe. The figure is seated on a throne or similar structure, with a large, draped cloth or garment covering the lower part of the body. The drawing is framed by a simple border.



more diverse misconceptions from critics ; one class investing him with almost saintly honors, from a superficial view of his works, while others, taking Vasari's statements in their worst sense, brand him as an atheist and miser, and both perhaps are inclined to estimate his genius, as a whole, at a higher value, in comparison with the best of his contemporaries, than it merits.

Perugino, with one exception, his "Allegorical Combat between Love and Chastity," painted only religious subjects, and with sufficient feeling and after a manner that entitles him to a place under the present head. He had one of those common temperaments, too largely endowed with caution for his own comfort and independence, making him unduly solicitous for his temporal welfare, self-denying for the present, to be beforehand with the future, without exalted views of life, relying overmuch upon material prosperity, and greedy of fame as a means of promoting it. While young, he was intensely diligent in the acquisition of his art, extending his studies late into the night, cheerfully undergoing austere privations, heedless of cold, hunger, fatigue, or comfort, reckless of appearances, sleeping for many months upon an old chest, for want of a proper bed, sustained through all by self-composed, or rather self-adapted, proverbs, to wit, that "a good time is sure to come after a bad," and that "when it is fair weather a man must build his house, that he may have shelter when he needs it." This low, selfish tone, so different from the genuine feeling of the children of Art, had been much strengthened by the injudicious maxims and incitements of his earliest teacher, an indifferent painter of Perugia, who was wont to set before him, not the virtue and beauty of the high calling itself, but the "advantages and honors" which were to accrue from it ; so that the greedy boy,

whose ears had drunk in every word which related to the "rewards bestowed on the various masters, ancient and modern," would quietly steal out of the studio, and inquire of the strangers that frequented Perugia, "in what city the best artists were formed?" Receiving but one reply, "Florence," he thither bent his steps, and there set himself perseveringly to the acquirement of what was to make him rich and famous.

This provident calculation is the key to his whole career. Perugino's intellect was active and intelligent; his spirit timid and selfish; his will firm; and his moral sentiments sufficient to keep him from positive evil courses; a reputable man, though not enough elevated to buoy him up above the level of a commonplace existence.

His first and strongest artistic impressions were derived from the pure mysticism of his native Umbria. They remained in vigor during his long career, and he had sufficient creative energy, aided by a susceptible, but not copious imagination, to produce that limited series of sacred subjects, always ideally treated with a leaning towards mysticism, whose grace and tenderness are so winning to people generally. The instinct of religion was deep in him. A refined, devotional sentiment pervades his best heads. He painted sacred themes from choice, and often for very inadequate remuneration, at the same time that he is accused of losing commissions from an over-grasping spirit. For the "Adoration of the Magi," that beautiful fresco of his birthplace, he received only seventy-five golden florins, and for the labors of himself and pupils for years on the copious frescoes of the Collegio del Cambio at Perugia, one of his most brilliant and beautiful works, but three hundred and fifty golden ducats, literally nominal rewards, both in view of what was produced for those prices, and of the sums

paid to other artists. It is pleasant to record this of him. His spirituality did at times shine forth, but the tares of life grew up thicker and thicker about it, until it became so choked and distorted as to be scarcely legible.

Perugino's entire artistic capacity, thus burdened by inferior sentiments, was never fully expanded. In a limited sense he suggests Raphael, or rather one phase of him. While he studied, he rapidly improved. His pictures came so much into repute as to be eagerly sought for throughout Europe, and were bought up at high prices by dealers for speculation. This coveted position attained, the disastrous effects resulting from his selfish aims soon became apparent. Viewing his reputation chiefly as moneyed capital, his chief anxiety was to get a large return from it. Ultimately, his studio degenerated into a manufactory. Scholars were hired to paint from his designs, though not always to their detriment, for, beside Raphael, there were others who became accomplished masters. Impatience and sordid habits led to hasty and unequal execution. He grew to be mannered, monotonous, affected and mechanical; repeating himself within a narrow circle. Nor was this the worst. For as he voluntarily lowered his position, he had the mortification to perceive other artists gaining the public esteem he once merited. Thereupon, he was seized with envy and moroseness, giving way to caustic criticisms and ill-natured remarks, desirous of covering up his own degeneracy by depreciation of his rivals. Many enemies and much trouble were the fruits. Michel Angelo publicly told him that he was a dolt and blockhead. Vexed beyond measure, Perugino sought reparation at law. But the magistrates decided in favor of their townsman, and the angry painter had to swallow the affront.

There was reason as well as temper in the severity of



Michel Angelo. Perugino, in systematically degrading art from an ignoble motive, had made himself an outlaw to all who considered that its duty was ever to aspire to the new and beautiful, irrespective of mercenary calculations. Some allowance, however, is due him on account of the perversions of early training. Like Rembrandt, his evil genius obtained the mastery. His portrait in the Uffizi suggests an interior struggle and the final victory of the worldly element. At last his best friends began to reproach him for his sordid views, his increasing weakness, and want of originality, particularly conspicuous in the lower part of the "Deposition,"\* an altar-piece begun by Filippino Lippi, and which, he not living to complete it, Perugino had been commissioned to finish. He peevishly replied "I have painted in this work the figures you formerly commended, and which then greatly pleased you; if they now displease you and you no longer extol them, what can I do?"

In this retrograde course the pure feeling which once distinguished his brush was superseded by a superficial, insipid sentiment, wholly artificial and without energy. Unfortunately, he did not stop on this level of descent. For in the "Assumption,"† painted in 1500 for the monks of Valombrosa, he indulges in vulgar buffoonery, than which nothing could be more contemptuous towards the tenet he was required to illustrate, and more disgraceful to himself. In Spain it would have cost him his life. The lower angels, floating in the air, with one hand raised towards the Immaculate Virgin, slyly point with the other to their abdomens, whose condition represents pregnancy. Much carelessness and coarseness are to be seen in his later works, and even a mockery of divine things, as if disgusted

\* No. 57, Florentine Academy.

† No. 55, Florentine Academy.

with his art and faith, and yet unwilling to forego his traffic in them.

Perugino had gained great riches in Florence, and was inclined to settle there permanently. He bought and built several large houses, married a young and beautiful girl, and selected a family sepulchre in the Church of the Annunciata. Several children had been born to him, one of whom, probably before his quarrel, he had named after Michel Angelo. But his enemies continued so to satirize and annoy him that he returned to Perugia, where he was without rivals or foes. He painted to the very last, dying in his seventy-eighth year, indulging in the same suspicious, unhappy temper, doubtless a disappointed man from having sought treasure exclusively in things perishable, in disregard of his better monitions.

Not long before this happened, he was accustomed to carry his ready money about his person for greater security, which, becoming known, tempted thieves to waylay and rob him, his life being spared only at his earnest entreaty "for the love of God." The greater part was recovered, but Vasari says he took it so much to heart as to wellnigh die of grief. Immediately after, he accuses him of not believing in the immortality of the soul, of irreligion, and of obstinately refusing all good counsel, "with words suited to the stubbornness of his marble-hard brain." His refusal of the sacraments when dying, because, as he is reported to have said, with Voltarian wit, he was curious to ascertain the fate of a soul that had never confessed, was quite sufficient to cause him to be branded as an infidel, and to provoke uncharitable censures and eternal damnation from every churchman. But in a letter to Isabella d'Este, accompanying his allegorical picture of the "Combat between Love and Chastity," now in the Louvre, he writes

"I pray God most humbly to grant me the grace to have done something which shall be agreeable to your highness," concluding with "May Christ preserve you in happiness!"\* Atheists and hard-headed men of his stamp are neither courtiers nor hypocrites. So we may accept these expressions and the "Timete Deum" inscribed upon his portrait, whether by himself or Lorenzo di Credi, as significant in him of an ineradicable religious instinct.

His various devices for and success in making money, to the sacrifice of conscientious work, and his zealous, unartistic care of it, gave him, as has been the case with Turner in our time, the reputation of being a miser. That he was indifferent to the ceremonial ordinances of religion, though not from disbelief in a future life, but from his insensibility to its nearness, and still more from his contempt for the hypocrisies and meannesses which were but too common among many ecclesiastics with whom he had to do, there can be little doubt. Hence the scarecrow epithet of atheist. Perugino probably was one of those honest, reflecting, soured minds, hating shams, in whom the untoward circumstances of this life choke up the avenues of spiritual light, and cause a reaction perilous for their souls. And no class of circumstances are more powerful to work mischief in them than the dishonesty of the clergy to their sacred trusts.

That Perugino had innate nobility of soul much of his art evinces. An anecdote speaks well also both for his wit and moral judgment. He was employed to paint several cloisters of a convent in Florence. As the Prior was skilled in preparing the costly ultramarine, he agreed to furnish it. Nevertheless, he was so suspicious and stingy that he would not trust Perugino to use it out of his

\* *Carteggio de Gaje*, vol. ii. p. 168.

sight, lest he should steal a portion. The painter determined to give him a salutary lesson. So placing beside him a bowl of water, whenever he had occasion to use the blue, he called upon the Prior to pour it out into the vase from which he took the color. Dipping his brush very often into it, at every second stroke he rinsed it off in the bowl of water. The Prior, seeing his store vanishing rapidly and the work advancing slowly, kept exclaiming "Oh! what a quantity of ultramarine is swallowed up by this plaster." Perugino would reply "You see for yourself how it is." At last the Prior went away in disgust. As soon as he was gone Perugino gathered the ultramarine which had subsided to the bottom of the bowl and returned it to the owner, observing "This belongs to you, father; learn to trust honest men, for such never deceive those who confide in them, although they well know how to circumvent distrustful persons like yourself, when they desire to do so." Even Vasari, with all his horror at Perugino's impiety and dislike to him generally, admits that he "was by nature upright and honest, and in no way covetous of another man's goods."

Independent of the Umbrian tone of his compositions, Perugino is decidedly individualistic. His frescoes in the Sistine Chapel and some of his earlier works are slightly Florentine in their composition, draperies, and side-groups of spectators. At Perugia, in his "Adoration of the Magi," he introduces his own portrait. But these examples are exceptional. His proper style in its best estate is simple, ideal, graceful, and tender; ecstatic in feeling, evidently drawn more from his imagination than from nature. His smaller figures are sometimes disproportionately tall and flexible, with heads awry, a legacy of the Giotteschi, and his children as models too frequently heavy and

vulgar. Adult figures in general are treated in a superior manner; while the round, thoughtful eyes of both, purity and earnestness of expression, and languishment of attitude, as if drunk with mystic longings and contemplations of unearthly joys, hint at the unfathomed yearnings of his own soul.

Very many of his pictures have suffered much from bad restorations, and their primitive delicacy of tones and well-harmonized, clear, strong tints, are irretrievably darkened. The rich, full folds of his draperies are more akin to the treatment of the Venetians than to the anatomical precision and freer movement of the Florentine painters. His angels are the beings of no sex, closely draped and usually with a half running motion, the great toes curiously turned up, lacking grace and truth of design, but overflowing with humility and devotion. Dramatic energy he seldom reaches, though there are figures that savor of the grandeur of Luca Signorelli. Historical composition and portraiture, occupying as they did the best contemporary pencils of the Florentines, involving severe studies from nature, had no attractions for him. The ecstatic, pathetic and picturesque in perfect repose; the lyric side of painting; feeble in variety of speech but sparkling in color and adornment, are his captivating points. His landscapes also have the best qualities of the Christian masters; fine gradations of clear sky, broad and peaceful aspects of a cultivated country, hill and plain, stream and city; few but well-defined and pleasingly combined features, letting the eye roam over much space. All this class of men love distance, cloudless horizons, the sparkle of sunshine, and the life-giving forms and colors of vegetation.

Despite his faults, Perugino impressed himself very strongly upon his generation. His scholars, including









*Primo Principato 14. n. 1124*



*Il rifratto. Studi 14. n. 6524*



*La Spugna 14. n. 6524*

*Fin. Spugna 14. n. 6524*



Raphael, who always revered him, were distinguished artists themselves. They extended and perpetuated his style in various directions, and although ultimately they passed over to the more matured development of Raphael and the scientific methods of Leonardo, yet they never entirely freed themselves from the influence of their old chief. Among those who rank highest, little known on account of the rarity of his works, is Giovanni, called *Lo Spagna* from his nationality. He has much grandeur, severity, and feeling, with deep, warm coloring, approaching the Venetian of the Bellinis. His heads are noble, formed in the school of Perugino, but of a character and dignity peculiarly his own, and entitling them to rank second only to the kindred efforts of his distinguished fellow-pupil. Indeed, his merit provoked so much jealousy in the painters of Perugia that he was compelled to take refuge in Spoleto. This was about 1516. Here he married a lady of good family, received the rights of citizenship, was much esteemed, and left his masterpiece, the *Madonna enthroned surrounded by saints*, now in the church of *Sta. Maria degli Angeli*.

The religious sentiment, which in Perugino has so often an irregular and wanton expression, found in Lorenzo di Credi (1459-1537), of Florence, a consistent and pure interpretation. He is always equal, refined, and exalted. The careful finish of his pictures ranks him next to Leonardo, whose intimate friend he was, and with whom he began his artistic education in the studio of Verrocchio. Diligent and conscientious in his work to a degree rare in any age; in character obliging and gentlemanly; he was one of those exemplary Christians whose religion partakes rather of deeds than catechism. In consequence he was frequently chosen as a referee in various matters, particularly to esteem the works of other artists. This delicate

position, demanding from rivals entire confidence in his candor and judgment, seems never to have been disputed. Upon his departure for Venice, Verrocchio left him in complete control of his business and income, and on his return was so much pleased with his administration that, had not Lorenzo absolutely refused, he would have made him his heir. As it was he named him chief legatee. On several occasions he journeyed to Venice, to give to Verrocchio a personal account of his trust. Upon his master's death in that city, he piously brought home his remains, and in the same upright and disinterested spirit that had characterized him throughout, handed over to the legal heirs all the property which had been confided to him. And it is worthy of notice, as showing the steadfastness of his character, that the sensuous charms of Venetian coloring do not seem to have made the slightest impression upon his style, though the visit of Fra Bartolomeo — pietist as he was — to Venice was not without influence upon his.

Di Credi's life is exhibited in his art. Beautiful, peaceful, and virtuous, it glided on, devoid of other incident than the love and friendship of his associates and the esteem of his fellow-citizens. Although neither of an ardent nor impressible nature, he was persuaded to do violence to his own taste, and in conjunction with the repentant Botticelli, Fra Bartolomeo, and other converts to the revival of strict purism in art, to add to that costly fanatical holocaust inspired by the preachings of Savonarola\* all his studies of the nude and every design and work not approved by the rigorous criticism of the Dominican monk. Unlike, however, most Protestant reformers, Savonarola was far from wishing to repudiate art in the service of re-

\* See *Art-Hints*, chap. 14, for an account of "The Struggle" between profane and religious art.

ligion. His real desire was to purify and reconsecrate it to the uses of the sanctuary and the promotion of morality and piety. Possibly the zeal of his disciples outstripped his sounder judgment, and many works perished which art and literature have cause to regret. It is said that a Venetian merchant offered in vain a large sum to save them from the fiery sacrifice, as a speculation for other parts of Italy. With the stern principles of Savonarola no such compromise could be even hearkened to. It was indeed a severe test of the sincerity of his converts. Books, manuscripts, statuary, paintings, objects of a corrupt luxury, the wanton song and obscene design, every article endeared to its possessor by cost or association, even many of those which under the most rigorous modern censorship are permitted to be publicly exposed or to rest unreprieved in private hands, as well as numerous others which well merited this fiery winnowing, were voluntarily heaped upon the consuming flames, at the call of little children, who went from house to house for that purpose, chanting sacred songs. The age had grown very licentious, and although not to the degree that subsequently prevailed under the direct influences of the more matured revived classicalism, both art and literature had largely ministered to the prevalent erotic vices, which called down the denunciations of Savonarola. To whatever excess of destruction the want of discrimination in drawing the precise line between the base and noble may have led his followers, he himself recognized thoroughly and eloquently advocated the subtle principle that underlies all that is really beautiful and true in art. "Creatures," he remarked in one of his popular sermons, "are beautiful in proportion as they participate in and approximate to the beauty of their Creator; and perfection of form is relative to beauty of mind. Bring hither



two women equally perfect in person ; let one be a saint and the other a sinner. You shall find that the saint will be more generally loved than the sinner, and that on her all eyes will be directed." \*

Lorenzo di Credi could not fail to sympathize in the political and religious views of Savonarola. However rigid, they were sincere and patriotic ; exaggerated also by the licentious and tyrannical character of the opposite faction directed by the Medici, which for a while they successfully stemmed, but only to make their final overthrow the more thorough and disastrous. With their downfall ended that power over the public mind which mystic art, in its best religious sense, had hitherto exercised through the long line of distinguished artists from Giotto to Raphael, and of whom Lorenzo was one of the purest and most single-minded examples. Thenceforth, naturalism, pseudo-classicism, and sensualism swayed art after their own unregulated desires ; in their own likeness they created it. But as yet we have still a little time left to worship the true before bowing down to idolatrous images. And as Lorenzo di Credi's art was exclusively devoted to religion — occasional portraits scarcely rank as an exception when we consider the spirit in which they were executed — so his career was thoroughly consistent with it. By nature and self-discipline he was fitted to be a citizen of that democratic republic whose sole sovereign was proclaimed to be Jesus Christ. But he was one of a fearful minority. Humanity was no more ripe in Italy in the fifteenth century than it is in America in the nineteenth for each man's heart to be his code of law ; a divine President over all ; men proving by their well-doing and well-being that that government is best which governs least. The world is still

\* Dennistoun, vol. ii. p. 162.

far from this condition, however perfectly a few individuals may realize it in themselves. Florence was then prolific in rowdies ; fanatics of irreligion and religion, and devotees of selfishness. So the fabric fell, because its foundations were but sand.

Lorenzo di Credi confines himself to a few simple variations of the usual religious themes. His holy personages are wondrously tranquil, beatific, of a chastened, mild, ideal beauty, with but slight force of character and no dramatic tendency, — in fine, mere incarnations of his own religious emotions. In color and finish he is a thorough purist ; almost cold and hard, yet singularly clear and attractive. So stringent is his chastity that he clothes his St. Sebastian and puts the arrows into his hands. Throughout all his works there is a tender, devotional sadness ; a sort of subjection of ecstatic joy to the reminiscences of a suffering, sinful world, yet full of accomplished hope and realized faith. The full, sweet, graceful contours of his angels, and their subdued happiness, as if the glory of celestial life overpowered them, are admirable in their way. Beside his, Perugino's are awkward and vulgar in action. They do not understand celestial locomotion, but sustain themselves by violent effort. Credi's float lightly in the air, as if really ethereal. His best are in his "Baptism of Christ," in the church of St. Dominico at Fiesole. They are kneeling, awaiting the call of the Saviour. This picture, perfectly preserved, is also worthy of examination on account of its fine, characteristic landscape. Florence is in the mid-distance, and in the foreground a river winding between hills, reflects in its limpid depths the quiet variety of banks, trees, and towers, borrowed from his favorite haunts in the picturesque country that environs the capital of Tuscany. Credi rarely puts his Madonnas and personages in-

doors. He loves the bright, open air, flowers, and all that is pure and peaceful in nature. His favorite themes are the most touching events in the life of Christ, which are treated with wonderful simplicity of composition. Vasari, quaintly but with much truth, sums up his encomium on him by observing that he was so "cleanly and finished in his work that every other painting in comparison with his seemed sketchy and untidy," telling us that he had a separate pencil for every tint, graduating them so skilfully as often to have from twenty-five to thirty shades of color upon his palette at once. He is said to have followed Leonardo's earlier method so successfully as to have had some of his pictures mistaken for his friend's. Believing in the efficacy of Agur's prayer, he was neither ambitious nor desirous of wealth, but content with a modest income, which he discreetly spent in Christian offices, dying in his seventy-eighth year, in the same serene spirit in which he had always lived.

Fra Bartolomeo (1469-1517), nicknamed "Baccio della Porta — Bat of the Gate," from his long residence near the Porta Romana of Florence, was an artist of similar religious feeling and limited range, but of more striking qualities and grander conceptions. His first master was Cosimo Rosselli, but attracted by the genius of Leonardo, he closely studied his works, and made such rapid progress as in a very short time to rank as one of the most promising of the young painters.

Vasari paints his character in a few words: "He was much beloved, not only for his talents, but for his many excellent qualities; industrious, quiet, upright, and fearing God; he chose a retired life, shunned vice, delighted in listening to the sermons of pious men, and always sought the society of the learned and sober;" and adds, as a reason

for his having left unfinished a certain fresco, that "our artist had a greater inclination for the practices of religious worship than for painting."

With such a disposition, the life of a monk had more attractions for him than any other career. Long before he assumed the habit, he had been accustomed to spend most of his time in the convent of San Marco, listening to the exhortations of Savonarola, forming a close intimacy with him and others of the fraternity. When the convent was attacked by the enemies of the preacher, he, with five hundred of his adherents, went to his defence. But the violence and bloodshed he witnessed so shocked his timid temperament, that he lost heart, and vowed that if he escaped from the strife, he would become a Dominican. The experience he had acquired of the outside world was not at all to his liking. He preferred the safety and solitude of a cell to the hazards of active partisanship and the license of the triumphant faction. As soon as possible he got away to Prato, where, on the 26th July, 1500, he took the irrevocable vows, to the infinite regret of his friends, the more especially that he had resolved to abandon painting. He even refused to finish his fresco of the "Last Judgment," begun in the chapel of the Hospital of Sta. Maria Nuova, which even in its present ruined condition is highly interesting, though hardly deserving the extravagant praise of Vasari, who says of it, "there scarcely could be anything better effected by the art of the painter." He saw it, however, in all its freshness, after its completion by Albertinelli, at the solicitation of Fra Bartolomeo, whose conscience continued to trouble him, as he had received money on its account. Portraits of himself, Fra Angelico, and other brethren, placed among the saved, may still be traced in it.

During two years, Fra Bartolomeo steadily refused to touch his pencil. Finally, the urgent entreaties of his associates, the repeated requests of his Superior, which were of the nature of commands, and the influence of the youthful Raphael, who had just come to Florence, overcame his obstinacy, and, after securing a dispensation from his offices in the choir, and a part of his other monastic duties, he consented once more to paint, stipulating, however, that his gains should go to the convent, except enough to keep him supplied with the required materials.

His artistic ambition now reawakened, he applied himself with more earnestness than ever to his studies. The friendship which Raphael had formed with him was of mutual benefit. He learned from the Frate greater freedom of design and more vigorous coloring, in turn imparting to the monk those exercises in perspective which he had acquired under the training of Perugino. Fra Bartolomeo, impressed with the advantages of direct studies from nature, employed models. He also constructed for himself the now well-known lay-figure, common to every studio, but then novel, for the arrangement of draperies, striving to adapt the technical methods and aims of the naturalistic painters to the lofty sentiment of religious art.

Having become excited by the reports from Rome of its marvels in painting, particularly the works of Raphael and Michel Angelo, he asked leave of the Prior to journey thither, that he might judge for himself of what he had heard. On his arrival in the Eternal City, instead of being inspired and encouraged by its examples of ancient and modern art, he was overwhelmed. It led him to depreciate his own abilities, and he hastily returned to Florence, to the more congenial atmosphere of monastic seclusion, leaving to Raphael to finish one of the two pictures he had



begun at Rome. The art of Rome overpowered the weak spirit of Andrea del Sarto in a similar manner, though to the truly strong, it is a prolific incentive to exertion. Paul Veronese felt his powers expand under the same influences that discouraged Andrea and the Frate.

In his own circle, Fra Bartolomeo had more courage. For, having often been reproached with inability to paint the nude, he tried a St. Sebastian entirely undraped, which had so much manly beauty, correct design, and warm, life-like tints, finished with great delicacy and thoroughness, as to wholly do away the charge, and to astonish both artists and amateurs. Alas for his conscientious scruples! His success was a discovery to himself, as well as his friends. After all, his nature and genius were so like other men's that conventual restrictions and discipline alone kept him from being of the world at large; neither better nor worse. Flight and cover were alike indispensable to his timid piety and art. It was shortly discovered by means of the confessional, as Vasari delicately phrases it, "that the grace and beauty of the vivid imitation of life imparted to his work by the talents of Fra Bartolomeo had given occasion to light and evil thoughts." Consequently, the picture was sold from the church to a merchant, who sent it to the King of France, by whose not prudish, courtly dames no doubt it was duly and discreetly admired. As it has since disappeared, we cannot now decide if the artist, in his zeal to disprove the charge made against his skill, perhaps mischievously put by those who read him better than he did himself, had imparted overmuch sensual beauty to his saint. May not its suggestiveness have sprung from the carnal appetites of the fair penitents themselves? Be that as it may, there is no approach in any other of his paintings to a low sentiment. His Magdalens, indeed, in



their passionate penitence, are all that they should be, while their forms and features, particularly the development given to their bosoms, would argue that he closely followed models of ordinary womanhood, without imitating the usual practice of ascetic masters in divesting them of every charm that savored of the flesh. In this respect, his women are more life-like than the types of Lorenzo di Credi, Francia, or even Perugino, yet they rightly touch the sympathies, without undue suggestion of fleshly instincts. It is evident that his proclivities were to the natural and sensuous; so that he nobly triumphed in a double sense: first, over the sceptics of his artistic powers, and secondly over his own bias towards the seductive, increasing, popular taste for the sensual, which was overcoming many distinguished artists, and even influencing, as far as might be, Raphael.

Furthermore, the Frate was passionately fond of music. This trait, his warm coloring, and his friendships, first for Raphael and then, the closest of all, for Mariotto Albertinelli (1475-1520?), point to an undercurrent of disposition quite the opposite of the usual ascetic inspiration. Mariotto was a hater of the monks; a restless vagrant, loving a good table and the pleasures of Cupid, "*car-nale nelle cose d' amore*." Moreover, he was impatient of study, and horribly bored by the exigences of his art. His chronicler thus gossips of him: "He was frequently not a little annoyed by the tongues of his brother artists, who tormented him, *as their custom is and always has been, the habit descending from one to another by inheritance, and being maintained in perpetual activity*." This sort of malicious mother-wit has degenerated neither in Florence nor Rome since Vasari's time, and is still as pungent and annoying to the unphilosophical or unamiable as

ever. It caused so much smart to Albertinelli that in disgust he gave up the brush, and took to the more genial occupation of innkeeper, affirming that he would not any more be bothered with perspective, foreshortening, or muscles, and what was much worse, censure. Whereas he formerly imitated flesh and blood, he now made it, by the aid of good wine, whose praises daily rejoiced his ears. But this debasement was only momentary. His experience as Boniface soon reconciled him to being once more an artist, and he continued to do great credit to the school in which he had been instructed.

Albertinelli's politics, like his character, were of the Medicean cast, but so far from alienating the monk from him, they grew to be as inseparable as twin brothers. He adopted his style and methods, confining himself to religious topics, without much real feeling, however, inclining, as in his "Annunciation" and "Holy Virgin enthroned,"\* to the meretricious, but showing grace, dignity, and excellent coloring in his "Salutation of Mary and Elizabeth," of the Uffizi. In his works there is an evident commingling of two qualities of motives and feeling, and it is not difficult to adjudge to the Frate and himself that which is directly born of each. But there is no reciprocal influence upon the art of the Frate. He stands entirely on his own foundation. When Bartolomeo decided to become a monk, Albertinelli went wellnigh distracted. His love for his sober-minded, faint-hearted friend, surcharged as he was with ascetic habits, was more like that of a lover for his mistress than of a man for one of his own sex. Life became a burden. For a long time he was inconsolably wretched, and even proposed to take orders himself that he might always be near Fra Bartolomeo. But when it

\* Florentine Academy, Nos. 72 and 73.

came to the test he could not overcome his repugnance to the brethren whom he had always vituperated. Eventually, Fra Bartolomeo rejoined him in an artistic copartnership, and they painted many things in common, as the records of San Marco prove, in assigning to either party the share due from joint earnings.

The intimacy between the pious monk and the jovial inn-keeper, seemingly so inconsistent, shows that restraint needs in every case some safety-valve, and that deficiency in one mind naturally seeks its equilibrium from another. Hence it is that the purest-minded, and most devout women often find much to like or admire in those whose tone of character is quite foreign to their own, or, lacking opportunity of personal intercourse with worldly minds, indulge in profuse perusal of those novels that deal most deeply with carnal passions and dramatic scenes. Such imaginations seek instruction, amusement, or exercise, either through the medium of an opposite temperament, but kindred spirit, or in the contemplation by means of literature, of the mysteries of minds, whose active career no temptation could induce them to take as an example. So, in the higher qualities and aspirations of the good and wise those of inferior moral grade find spiritual sustenance. Mariotto Albertinelli could not have loved Fra Angelico, as his asceticism and spirituality were wholly out of his mental range. But in Fra Bartolomeo he found at bottom sufficient affinity of feeling to plant himself upon, and while vicariously working off for him his sensuous activity, and giving him a passive enjoyment therefrom, he was at the same time elevated and restrained by the superior morality of the monk. In these psychological exchanges the benefit is mutual, provided the respective natures are well balanced, or if the wiser and nobler can raise to its own stand-point the

perceptions of the other, while benefiting from its worldly activity and experience.

Fra Bartolomeo, unlike Lorenzo di Credi and the religious artists generally, prefers in-door life. He shuts himself off from the world, and manifests no particular delight in the landscape. This seclusion is joined to a spirit of humility and obedience. His restricted circle of compositions abounds in holy personages enthroned, or in glory, exalted to authority and beatitude, made imposing by regal attributes, skilfully grouped to display their relative dignity, Madonnas being surrounded with youthful angels who appear as celestial pages, hovering or seated about the Queen of Heaven, playing on musical instruments, and supporting her voluminous drapery on the dais of the throne itself. Grand though simple architecture, rich coloring, a concentration of power on a few objects, a sublimity of sentiment, sparse accessories, everything tending to the exaltation of spiritual authority, are his emphatic points. His style is eminently suited to convey to the spectator lofty impressions, surprising many into new conceptions of the capacity of painting to excite profound emotions. This is pointedly true of his masterpiece in the church of St. Romano at Lucca, known as the "Madonna della Misericordia." Unfortunately it has been "refreshed," as the custode mildly terms the repainting it has undergone, but with the exception of its newness of look the character of the Frate is well preserved. In it we see his highest religious sentiment, serious, dignified, and graceful, united to harmonious design, careful study of nature and individual character, great force of chiaroscuro, and fine, deep coloring. The Madonna stands upon an elevated pedestal, around the steps of which is a crowd of devotees, including many portraits from the family that ordered the picture,

and their retainers, too literal to be very noble, and over whom the Virgin spreads her mantle, upheld by angels, as a protecting shield. Exalted above her is Christ, showing his wounds, and bending over the scene beneath. The red wing-like drapery extending from his spread arms has not a happy effect. His angels, however, literally soar in the air.

Fra Bartolomeo was equal to great topics and more variety, but his ambition was weaker than his talents. Whatever he attempted was vigorously and thoroughly done from a sense of duty, and he evinces systematic progress. In his earlier works, which approach miniature painting in fineness and delicacy, as for instance those little gems, the "Birth" and "Circumcision" of Christ, in the Uffizi, the composition is noble and beautiful, and the finish Leonardesque. Yet they have the force of large paintings. The tender, womanly expression of his Madonnas, and the graceful, infantile, natural movements of his children, indicate the sympathies of a husband and father. His conception of woman, more human than divine, is still a generous, lofty one. So without any evident taste for the landscape or the poetry of its details, it assumes with him, when he does treat it, a broad, grand aspect, full of mysterious peace and harmony, as if the spirit of its Creator rested upon it. But his home is within walls. By faith he sees visions. Behold his Virgin \* amid her cloud of angel witnesses descending from above to St. Bernard, obscuring the earth by the brightness of her coming. He who could see such sights was not without compensation in his exclusion of the outer world. Kugler accuses him of "want of inward power for the conception of grand and elevated subjects." On the contrary, this seems to be his chief attribute. He is

\* Florentine Academy, No. 66. Good in composition, but for him crude in color and poor in types of heads.



exceedingly impressible to elevated, earnest sentiment. His vision centres upon few objects, but is on that account all the stronger. Look at his "Pietà,"\* a work bearing marks of change and afterthought in the background, but full of solemn light and the deep harmonies of devotional sentiment. How moving the unexaggerated sorrow of the group of the Madonna, Magdalen, and St. Dominic sustaining the dead Christ, with such tender, loving handling, and earnest gaze upon those lifeless features! Their grief is that of humanity over an irrevocable loss. But the artist has taken care that we shall not so limit his meaning. Sympathize we may and must with those mourners, but not without the fact of eternal life to renew our Hope and sustain our Faith. Farther back in the mid-distance, behold the angel at the empty sepulchre; Christ appearing as the gardener to Mary Magdalen; and the historical incidents of that memorable journey to Emmaus. We now feel that the Saviour has risen, and immortality is brought to light. Is not a picture that can thus suggest the highest facts and mysteries of Christianity, at once pleasing us by its art, instructing us by its religious truths, and elevating us by its spirituality, of more account than "Derby Days" and "Horse Fairs," powerful though they be in the mere materialism and naturalism of art? Yet crowds find their affinities of taste and feeling in the latter, — the legitimate offspring of modernism, — while few indeed are now touched by the former. Is this difference of appreciation wholly owing to the artistic inferiority of the true pre-Raphaelites to the Friths, Rosa Bonheurs, or Leightons of our day? May not some portion of our own souls need the quickening stroke of Moses' rod to draw forth living waters?

\* See Appendix, No. 89 of Catalogue.



The principal imitator of Fra Bartolomeo was Fra Paolina (1490–1547), of Pistoja, a brother monk, who inherited his designs, and from whom they passed to Plautilla Nelli (1523–1588), a Dominican nun, also an artist of some merit. But superior to either, and akin to the Frate in grandeur and elegance, though with an original manner, was Francesco Granacci (1477–1544), the scholar of Domenico Ghirlandajo. As he had an independent fortune he only painted as an amateur, and his pictures are rare. They are of a religious character, sweet and graceful, pleasing in color, his forms being full and inclining to the grandiose style of Michel Angelo. Tommaso di Stefano and Sogliani (1492–1544), followers of Lorenzo di Credi, were school artists of some repute in Florence, unknown elsewhere, and deserving of mention only as closing the present series, several of whom are ranked here not so much from innate devotion as from having been led to religious subjects by force of example and the taste and demands of others. One of the most amiable and tender of this class, with at times an elegance that savors of Raphael, is Raffaellino del Garbo (1476–1524). His colors are hard and clear, and his feeling naïve and good.

Before bidding farewell to the several epochs and phases of Christian art that have passed before us, it is well to sum up in a few words their most marked characteristics.

What Byzantine and Italian art was when Giotto first struck out a new and broad path of improvement has been sufficiently shown. The impetus given to painting by him and the distinguished epic and lyric masters of his style was chiefly in the direction of new intellectual motives and a fresher and freer interpretation of old topics. They inspired art with a “living soul.”

Then came Masaccio and his great troupe of naturalists,

to shape it into human forms, and give it variety and still larger freedom. Henceforward it pursued two distinct tracks, the one illustrated by Fra Angelico and the purists and the other by Fra Filippo and those who made technical progress their great aim. The former, governed by one absorbing idea, concentrated their feeling and power on a special class of motives, the highest, it is true, because treating exclusively of the eternal welfare of the soul, but therefore in range the narrower and in meaning the more mystic or vague. Hence their art was in a large degree exceptional, appealing only to the spiritually developed religious mind, while in its functions it was more suggestive than illustrative. It was a record of faith, an ideal art rooted in the partial revelations vouchsafed by Heaven to earth of the immortal nature of the soul and its possible destinies. And as mankind at large are ever slow to be quickened by spiritualities, it took no permanent, universal root in its heart, though it had a marvellous influence over those who received it with kindred sentiment.

The track of the scientists was firmer and broader; their language and aims more widely intelligible, and their success correspondingly greater. They sought to conciliate all tastes, and to arrive at beauty and truth by strictly following out the lessons and examples about them in the natural world, giving individuality perfect liberty of choice. Hence its pleasing variety and historical tendency, treating even religious subjects rather from the probable or common point of view, making human character more than the heavenly their special inspiration. The natural and true were their aims, equally unfettered by any æsthetic theory of the ideal beautiful or the spiritual celestial. Various minds, as we have seen, shaped out to themselves particular fields of technical progress. One made anatomy his

chief study ; another, perspective ; a third, color ; a fourth exhumed classical art to get at its secret of perfection ; some delighted in the landscape ; others, in the animal world ; the serious and grand, graceful and refined, whimsical and extravagant, sensuous and joyful, interpenetrated various creative and inventive minds, each of which became the leader of some special progress, giving birth to strongly defined styles and widely contrasted motives.

The mental bias and its particular fruit, at once the cause and effect of the extraordinary progress in painting, illustrated by those artists who led it up, step by step as it were, to that degree of perfection which found its fullest development in the three masters of the great masters themselves, to each of whom a separate chapter must be devoted, has been as clearly described as was possible in a volume embracing so wide a range of time and character. And with one further remark, to point out a generic difference existing between the class of religious masters last reviewed and their more naturalistic contemporaries, we must pass on to the successors of both. We refer to the striking contrast between the arrangement of the compositions of each. The purists, represented by Francia, Santi, Perugino, Credi, the Frate, and their associates, are simple, serious, and quiet, with a sort of instinct for regular lines and masses and symmetrically disposed figures ; a dislike of a crowd ; a deep feeling both for light and repose ; a repugnance to shadow ; and a lively sympathy with the pure and innocent in nature ; in short, a strongly defined liking for the peaceful, regular, and harmonious in all things. Lippi, Filippino, Botticelli, Ghirlandajo, Signorelli, and their companions, on the contrary, are at home in an animated crowd, irregularly or lively disposed masses and groups, dramatic action, a multiplicity of details, striking

effects, and general vigor of color and accessories. They are men of the world; the others of the cloister. Rumohr attributes the love of repose and harmony of the purists to their taste for classical art. Not so! They had no predilection for it. But they had for retired lives and religious sentiment, which passed from themselves into their paintings, just as the more energetic habits and worldly experience of the strict naturalists gave a corresponding tone to their works.

## CHAPTER XII.

The matured Fruit of Naturalism. Trained Painters. Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, 1435-1560. Michele di Ridolfo. Domenico Beccafumi, 1484-1549. Giovanantonio Bazzi or Sodoma, 1474-1544, the Buffoon and Rival of Raphael. His Antics and Genius. Andrea del Sarto, 1488-1530, the Wife-ridden. His Talents and Weakness. The Colorists of this Class of Painters. Franciabigio, 1483-1524, the Irritable Bachelor. Il Rosso. Domenico Puligo, 1475-1527, the Dissipated. Pontorno, 1493-1558, the Odd and Amiable. Society of the Trowel.

WE now reach the matured fruit of naturalism in a class of painters whose sympathies and habits are quite apart from the religionists, and who made technical skill their highest aim. They are educated artists, with no special bias of sentiment or thought, nor exclusive partiality for any class of subjects, but who turned their pencils to whatever topics patronage required. Nevertheless, there were great masters among them. It mattered little whether mythology, Christianity, decoration, history, the grotesque, allegorical, serious, or sensuous furnished their well-disciplined minds and hands with topics, so that as artists they were successful. Not that their own idiosyncrasies did not more or less color their art, but they had learned to view it as a pliable mechanism, to be inspired by the taste, fashion, or caprice of the moment, to the intent rather to astonish or please from curious invention, clever imitation, the subtleties of design or color, or force and vagaries of manner, than to enunciate elevated truths or depict spiritual beauty. We miss in them alike the concentrated, lofty religious idealism of the one class already reviewed, and the











earnest, high-minded intellectual ambition of the other, intent upon the development of high art, and laboriously and loyally working out its perfection. Those now to come on the stage are, however, by no means the representatives of its decadence. They simply coquetted with High Art, and are the beginning of its downward phase; bringing true progress to an end and inaugurating a transition period, in which the original impetus of noble feeling and sincere labor being gradually exhausted, its light for a while wavered, flickered, and finally burned down to its socket amid smoke and consuming darkness.

But before the utter and disastrous extinction of its bright hopes and powerful energies, minds replete with much promise and hands prolific with clever work troop around the uncertain standard of art, postponing for a while our sorrow, though vaguely and sometimes plainly hinting at its destined advent. The first to be noticed is Ridolfo Ghirlandajo (1485-1560), son of Domenico, educated in the school of his uncle David and of Fra Bartolomeo, thus having the double advantage of a practical training under the better influences of religious and naturalistic art. His force and invention were but moderate, but he formed a pleasing, graceful, composite style, in its best condition resembling the second manner of Raphael, with whom he had become intimate, and who thought sufficiently well of him to leave one of his Holy Families in his hands to be finished when he was called away to Rome. He also urged him to go with him, but Ridolfo declined, alleging that he could not exist out of sight of Brunelleschi's majestic dome. Posterity seems disposed to justify the partiality of Raphael, for it continues to confound one of Ridolfo's Holy Families, that of the Pozzo, or Well, in the Tribune of the Uffizi, having, too, the "Cardellino" for its neighbor, with

the reputation of Raphael; though no one who has carefully studied the two, while admitting the cleverness of Ridolfo, will be liable to mistake one hand for the other. In portraits also he approaches the Florentine style of Raphael. In an adjoining room we see Ridolfo to still better advantage in his two masterpieces, the "Miracles of St. Zenobius." They are admirably composed, have much freedom, vigor of design and color, fine character in the heads, and dignified action. But the promise of these and other works was not fulfilled in his later. The desire of gain quenched his nobler fire, and he grew to be hasty, mechanical, and meagre, so that his reputation, which began so brightly, darkened, and ultimately left no conspicuous mark in the annals of painting. Of his numerous companions Michele di Ridolfo comes nearest to his manner. They painted much in common. Ridolfo kept many promising young artists in his studio, executing by their assistance numerous works on panel and canvas, which he exported to Germany, France, and England, greatly to his profit. But as he grew richer the tares of wealth choked his genius, and his ambition as an artist proportionately diminished.

Domenico Becafumi (1484–1549), of Siena, had more versatility and power. He formed his style in Rome, after a diligent study of antique sculpture and the works of Raphael and Michel Angelo, acquiring so much correctness of design and grandeur of manner as to be honored with the appellation of the Michel Angelo of the Sienese school. His best works, being limited to Siena, and not in a favorable light, particularly the fine frescoes of the Oratory of San Bernardino, painted in rivalry with Bazzi, contribute to keep his fame more in shadow than it merits. He is superior in tempera or fresco to oils, and his historical com-

positions are exceedingly felicitous and picturesque, by a happy unity telling their story at a glance. The Academy boasts of one of his best easel pictures; "St. Catherine receiving the Stigmata." It is somewhat cold in color, but well composed, and displays admirable strength of design, force of relief, and aerial perspective. He is inclined to anatomical *tours de force*, difficult foreshortenings, and those ambitious technical flights which in weaker hands soon became very common, to the great detriment of pure taste, ending in making of painting a pictorial gymnasium. Angels and saints, in this conceited exaggeration of design, were converted into furiously kicking, climbing, and sprawling or awkwardly stretching beings, in violent commotion of some kind or other, or attitudinizing so as to show off their persons, with which they seem themselves to be vastly enamored. This folly did not possess Becafumi. He did difficult things well, and, of their kind, in good taste; with richness of invention, elegance of composition, and particular adaptation to the architecture which he was required to decorate. Like all who prefer the grand and striking to the simple and refined, he is at times unequal and careless. But his aim is strength and dignity; his figures, when he so designs, however small, appearing colossal and full of vigor. He was wont to say he could not paint well out of the atmosphere of Siena. His habits were solitary, and he also resembled his favorite master in being a God-fearing, upright man, dying greatly lamented by the Sienese, whose poets long kept his memory green in Latin and Italian song.

The pride of Siena, however, is Giovanantonio Razzi, or Bazzi \* (1474-1544). The last seems to have been his true name, but destiny capriciously stole it away, and gave

\* Vasari, vol. ii. p. 162, Lemonier's edition.



him instead the dirty nickname of Sodoma, which has stuck to him for upwards of three centuries, being not of opprobrious derivation originally, as many suppose, but a vulgar corruption of Sodona or Sogdona, a family name of the Bazzi, and used by the artist himself in some of his written contracts still on file. His birthplace is uncertain, but presumed to be Vercelli, in Piedmont. Siena has more claims upon his memory than any other locality, for she is the richest in his works. History has been as careless of his reputation as he was himself; for we have but lately discovered his rightful patronymic, while she has thrown more dirt at him than he deserves. But little cared he for foul names or the freaks of fortune so that his life went merrily on. With none of the misanthropy and gloomy fancies of Piero di Cosimo, he was equally as eccentric and fantastic. Improvident, light-hearted, with a touch of the buffoon, dressing pompously or absurdly, he attracted about him the vagrants of fun and gayety, while not at all nice as to their quality. His mode of life, hand to mouth and free and easy, found small favor with the sober-minded citizens of Siena. He turned his house into a menagerie of strange animals. Monkeys, badgers, squirrels, wild-cats, dwarf asses, tiny ponies, tortoises, magpies, queer birds, and every sort of brute oddity he could get hold of, swarmed around him. The chief pet was a raven, which so cleverly imitated his voice as to deceive visitors, to his never-ending amusement. This extraordinary family were very fond of him, and when he was within doors they were accustomed to press about him, astonishing his company at his bidding with the most ludicrous and extravagant antics, saluting their ears with discordant cries, a hideous Babel of sounds, causing them to believe that by chance they had found their way into Noah's ark at feeding-time. His

magnetic charm over animals, making them docile to his wayward fancies, extended to his own species. The young were highly entertained by his drolleries. Children loved him, and were amused by his society. Vicious he was not, but he lacked self-respect, forethought, and had an unconquerable aversion to orderly habits. With such a household, coupled with eccentricities of behavior wholly at variance with domestic comfort and the decencies of life, small wonder it is that his young wife, after the birth of a daughter, left him, and took upon herself the support of their only child. He bore this as unconcernedly as he did every other mishap while his animal spirits were sound. Waggish and mischievous names, which he wantonly provoked, only made him laugh and wittily retort in kind. Indeed he composed verses upon the worst, and merrily sung them to the accompaniment of the lute. His pranks at Monte Uliveto, between Siena and Arezzo, while painting its celebrated series of frescoes begun by Luca Signorelli, formed a risible epoch in the lives of those staid and refined Benedictines. Among his animals was a Barbary horse that had won many prizes at races, which he used to display at his windows, being vainer of them than of his fame as an artist. While employed near Florence, it chanced that his steed won at the San Bernardo race. It being the custom to call out the name of the winner, the boys who followed the trumpeters inquired his. "It Mattaccio," the arch-fool, was the answer they got. Relishing the joke, they shouted it most lustily, to the great scandal of the grave Florentine dignitaries, who indignantly exclaimed, "What impertinence is this that there should be called through our streets so vile a name!" and Bazzi, with his ape behind him on his horse, had a narrow escape from being stoned by the populace.

His vanity was of the weakest sort, for having been well rewarded by Leo X. for his beautiful picture of "Lucretia stabbing herself," and made a chevalier, he became so elated that thenceforward he lost what little steadiness of character he had, working seldom otherwise than as want or caprice dictated.

Vasari, however, has painted Bazzi blacker than he deserves. That his follies were unfavorable to artistic development none can dispute. He was his own worst enemy; an odd not vicious compound, extravagant in everything, and accepting life as a great joke. But his genius, despite low and uncongenial tastes, forced him to become a great artist. He was powerful, fertile, original, graceful, and varied; warm and tender in color, though not always; often careless, unequal, and impatient, but in everything wonderfully individualistic, and leaving the impression that, had he willed it, sustained by true ambition, he might have rivalled Raphael. As it is, in several points he is his equal. His heads are studies from the superior classes of the Sieneese, and are remarkable for their spirited beauty. The type of his Madonnas is most womanly; a being more full of feeling, more natural and lovable than those of Raphael; not so ideal and heavenly, but richer in those qualities of mind and person that make men happiest and best and make them honor women the most. No infidelity is possible towards his pure, loving, intellectual ideal of the female sex, whose tender constancy, written by her soul in every feature, surrounds the spectator with an atmosphere of chastity and truth. A full-rounded, delicately-moulded, well-proportioned, and gracefully-outlined person exhibits to us the completest physical beauty, invincible to sensual inclination from its perfect alliance with virtue. Hence Bazzi's standard of female excellence must have been based

upon a rare conception of the highest attributes of the sex, the more singular in one whose externals were of so unrefined a character.

The loveliest female form, to our knowledge, that ever had birth from artist's pencil is his Eve, in the fresco of the "Descent of Christ into Limbo," in the Sienese Academy. She is a miracle of grace, modesty, and timidity. Her countenance is radiant with the new hope of perfected salvation as the Saviour appears, yet not wholly purified from the sadness of past sin. The consciousness of this still lingers in her expression, like the faintest shadow over the earth of a passing sunset-mist all aglow with the rays of the parting day. But her beautiful form is quickened with her new spiritual life, imparting to her a loveliness which only celestial joy can bestow, yet in attitude and feeling still eloquent with the "good" work of the primal creation, thus combining the highest charms of earth with the divine graces of heaven.

Bazzi borrows with equal felicity from imagination and nature. His Christs are powerfully conceived, not as a spiritualized, rapt being, but with the highest stamp of earthly beauty, nobility, and pathos, exalted by suffering and divine compassion or majestic endurance. He had as noble a conception of the *man* Christ as of the *woman* Madonna. His contrasts of expression are singularly forcible. Witness the malignant countenance of the Wandering Jew about to buffet and taunt the Saviour, in his "Ecce Homo," a picture that would honor any artist, though very inadequately rendered here in outline.\* The fanatical vehemence of Abraham, a grand figure, about to offer up Isaac, a picture in the Duomo at Pisa, contrasted with the shrinking *willingness* of the victim, is one of his happy efforts.

\* Pl. L, fig. 35.

The angel *flies* towards the patriarch, and by his touch arrests the sweep of the sword just as it is about to strike, Isaac submissively gazing upon his father, who looks up astonished at the miraculous interference. In the Uffizi there is but one undoubted picture of his, a "St. Sebastian," painted for a religious banner, much injured by exposure to the weather, but most admirable for its correct, classical proportions and power of expression, in which the welcome of heaven has already triumphed over the pangs of martyrdom. Pure sentiment, vital force, and scientific execution, saving the color now gone, are rarely seen more happily united than in this figure. Another of his masterly performances is St. Catherine in ecstasy, and in another scene, swooning; wonderful groups in his frescoes in the Church of St. Domenico, Siena; pathetic, impressive, richly conceived and adorned.

Bazzi painted in the Vatican, but with the exception of some fine grotesques and arabesques nothing of his is now to be seen there. He, with Signorelli and Perugino and the greatest artists of their generation, who had been summoned to Rome to decorate the state apartments of that palace, lived to see their varied and beautiful works in great measure swept away by order of Julius II., to give ample space for the pencil of a youthful rival, who, in their lives even, overshadowed their fames by his more fertile genius, as he has distanced all subsequent artistic rivalry. On the walls of the Farnesina villa he appears in direct competition with Raphael,—their common patron being the munificent and æsthetic banker, Chigi,—in his attractive compositions from the Life of Alexander the Great. On every side we have evidence of the eminence he might have won, had not he been so entirely controlled by his erratic, impatient humor, which not only brought upon him









Donna e Cristo e s. 52.

55



Donna e Cristo e s. 55.



Donna e Cristo e s. 56.



adversity and reproach, but corrupted his style. His St. Catherines are too often gifted with a sly, mischievous expression, anything but in harmony with the sincerity of holiness. In his celebrated "Epiphany" in St. Agostino at Siena he makes Joseph jealously scowling at the handsomest of the Magi, who is regarding Mary with too warm admiration. The monks of Monte Uliveto have a tradition that the quality of his painting used to depend upon the goodness of his meals. To paint well, he told them, he must fare well, and his pencil moved best to the jingle of coins. It must be confessed stingy monks often needed such hints, as Domenico Ghirlandajo and his brothers learned to their indignation, when those of Vallombrosa wished to put them upon the diet of day-laborers, with whom they were disposed to class them. Bazzi did, however, justly incur the charge of indecorum, growing out of a grudge against the monks for their reprovals of his scandalous weaknesses. Causing a screen to be put up to hide his work, a series in fresco illustrating the Life of St. Benedetto, he composed the story of the priest Fiorenzo, the enemy of the saint,—who tempted and disturbed him by bringing loose women to revel and sing in his sight,—in a literal manner, which shocked and offended the brotherhood beyond measure. The wantons, graceful and beautiful as he well knew how to paint them, were seen dancing naked before the saint, and practising upon him their lewdest blandishments. The General of the Order, perceiving the scandal thus put upon the convent, commanded the instant destruction of the picture, but was finally appeased by the figures being chastely draped. This painting is one of his best, having been done with real pleasure. Even beside Luca Signorelli he displays great and varied merit and fertile invention. In one of the series Bazzi painted the

portraits of his wife and daughter, and himself, clad in a costly, fashionable cloak, given to him by a gentleman of Milan, who had recently joined the order. At his feet he puts several of his darling animals, including the chattering raven and a baboon.

The frescoes in St. Domenico, at Siena, evince many of his best qualities, are rich in color and ornamentation, vigorous, and seductive, but at the same time betray a haste and lightness that are offensive. His boy-angels are merry, substantial rogues. The most disagreeable and unnecessary feature is a lapdog, just escaped from his mistress, barking with ludicrous affright and fury at the freshly decapitated head of the saint rolling on the ground towards him, painfully natural in its spasms. Such a scene jars upon the higher motives of the composition, which otherwise are effectively given. His naturalism is not always of this order. In his "Deposition," a masterpiece preserved in the Church of St. Francesco, and one of the finest paintings in Europe, the helmet on the ground at the foot of the cross reflects most delicately and truthfully the objects near it; a picture within a picture, and a careful study of particular effects not common in his day. His merit was not, as Vasari implies, mere chance, nor was he altogether the vagabond and buffoon he describes him to have been. Whenever he chose, he excelled, and after a manner attesting not only original genius but close study and keen observation. Self-control and concentration alone were wanting to have fixed him permanently in the first rank of the most brilliant age of painting. As it is, he is an independent, vigorous artist, full of resources, resembling none other; if influenced by any one, perhaps by Leonardo, thus showing his affinity for the loftiest intellectual example. In his old age he left Siena to seek employment

at Volterra, Pisa, and elsewhere, returning, however, to die in the city of his fame in a hospital, forsaken by those whom he had so often amused, and drinking to its dregs the bitter cup of distress which his continued improvidence had filled for him. His good works survive. His follies let us charitably forget. Take him in all, he was a rare man and one of Italy's greatest painters.

Few would recognize in Andrea da Angiolo di Francesco one of the world's pet names in art. Vannucchi, the family name, throws light upon it, but to make it clear to all we must continue to call him by the more familiar than respectful nickname given him by the Florentines, after their manner, because of his father's trade, — Andrea del Sarto, — the tailor's Andrew, as it reads, (1488–1530.) He is fortunate, however, that unlike Sodoma it involves no degradation of character, though he deserved to be stigmatized, not however without a due share of charitable pity. For it was the wiles and blandishments of a heartless woman that made him an ingrate and defaulter. Perhaps the shame of the blows, and the sting of her arrogance, both of which Vasari experienced while a pupil of Andrea, which were duly shared by his young companions, and which finally drove all of them out of the studio, may have given almost unconsciously some extra coloring matter to his pen while writing of this shrew. But the mishaps which befell the painter after his ill-advised marriage, derived as they were from his wife's influence, prove that destiny, taking advantage of his amorous weakness, set her up as his evil genius. Poor Andrew! Yet, after all, we shall see that he was a willing sacrifice, and, like most men in the same category, in hugging his torment had no more satisfactory consolation to take to himself than the humiliating confession, old as Adam, "the woman gave him dirt to eat and he ate it."



Andrea, in his infatuation, did his best to idealize her into a Madonna, his constant type, but though handsome and dainty, as the animal goes, no one can view those hard, selfish features, so full of passion and will, without crediting the narrative of an eye-witness and a sufferer. Her character and siren attractions, in pitiable contrast with his own immoral irresolution, are graphically perpetuated by him, and with a strong appeal to one's sympathies, considering that the tempter is the wife of his bosom, in their joint portraits in the Pitti, in which picture she pits her charms and influence against his duty and honor, as with one hand caressing her, the other holding that letter from the King of France whose good was by his folly turned to evil, he ponders upon *this* motive and upon *that*. Easy enough to see whose is the victorious will.

Andrea began life well. His genius speedily opened up to him a brilliant career. While with Piero di Cosimo, he took advantage of every hour he could claim as his own to study the celebrated rival cartoons of Leonardo and Michel Angelo, then in all their perfection and *furore* of success. The dirty vagaries of Cosimo disgusting him, jointly with his friend Franciabigio he set up an independent studio, so much to the satisfaction of the public that he had no lack of commissions. It is reported of Andrea that he made a journey to Rome, and like Fra Bartolomeo was so powerfully impressed by antique and modern art that in utter despair he returned at once to Florence. This lack of intellectual pluck is what might be expected from him. Moral stamina and elevation of mind were his great deficiencies, the want of which as pilots shipwrecked his career. In the midst of artistic prosperity at home, fast acquiring honors and riches, creditably sustaining his own relations, who were dependent upon his rising fortunes, he fell madly

in love with a married woman, Lucrezia Fede, — seduced by her, so says his biographer. As she soon after became a widow, he made her legitimately his own, or rather he became hers. Cupid forefend that another artist do likewise ! For her he abandoned his own parents to cruel poverty, neglected his friends and his art, and lost his good name. Sufficient recompense was it to be her witless slave. Her contribution to his domestic happiness was an imperious, prodigal, jealous, and wilful disposition. Would that this was all. Without honesty and good faith herself, she caused him to consider such traits of character as quite superfluous in himself. Her relations consumed all of his earnings that she did not, and both kept him in perpetual toiling want, because his mild, feeble temper was incapable of resisting their impositions.

The dealers took advantage of this weakness to get his pictures at prices which repaid them fourfold, and greedy patrons were always on the watch for his necessities to make their own terms, while cunning, stingy ones, such as the Sacristan of the Servites, stimulated his ambition and excited his jealousy to get him to undertake for a pittance important works, like those beautiful frescoes in the court of the Annunciata. A friend urged him to escape from his unfavorable circumstances, leave his wife temporarily, and after he had recovered his fortune and reputation to return, if he saw fit. While debating this remedy for his domestic tyranny, Francis I., who had conceived a great admiration of his paintings, not only invited him to France but sent him money for the journey. His mood being propitious, and his real friends sustaining him, he set off at once. On the day of his arrival he received handsome presents, followed by numerous orders, for which he was liberally paid. An annuity was settled upon him, and

fortune did her best to content him with the present and do away the evils of the past. Andrea was now abundantly satisfied with his position and prospects. But in an evil hour letters came from his wife, complaining vehemently at his absence, protesting that she had never ceased to weep bitterly in consequence, rekindling his dormant passion with honeyed words, and concluding with the assurance that if he did not speedily come back she should die. Fired by this artful eloquence, and stimulated by the desire of displaying himself in his rich apparel and improved estate to his family and friends at home, he begged permission of the king to return to Florence to arrange his affairs, promising, as soon as this was done, to bring with him his wife and make France his permanent residence. Still further to win the assent of his royal master, he suggested that he could improve the present visit to procure for Francis the best works of art of his country. The king reluctantly yielded, first exacting an oath on the Gospels that he would keep his promise within a given time. He then intrusted him with a liberal sum to purchase paintings and statuary, beside a handsome amount for his own necessities.

This was in 1519. Arrived home, his family, or rather his wife's, were overjoyed to have among them again the now full-handed Andrea, as easily squeezed as a sponge. At their instigation, neglecting his own parents, he made large gifts to the brother and sisters of Lucrezia, indulging himself with them in all sorts of pleasures, even the expensive one of building, idling away his time, so that when his vacation had expired he had not only squandered all of his own money but the king's. Yet holding to his oath, he had determined to go back and make his peace as he best could, when his wife dissuaded him from it. Never had a king behaved more royally to an artist, and never

had an artist behaved more shabbily to a king. Andrea perjured himself to gratify Lucrezia, after having betrayed the most generous of trusts. It is difficult to account for her persuading him from returning, for Francis, without doubt, would have forgiven the loss of the money in the gratification of new works from him, and Andrea would have again trimmed his sails to catch the favorable gales of fortune. As it proved, he mortally and justly offended Francis, who for a long period would not even look at one of his pictures, and threatened if he could get him into his power he would "do him more harm than he had before done him good." When too late Andrea repented himself, and sought reinstatement with the angry monarch. But his efforts were fruitless with one who was too good a judge of wanton women to trust any one who trusted them.

For ten years longer Andrea dragged on a precarious existence, always painting, but with a shattered reputation, pained conscience, and full of regrets for not having improved the turn in his tide of affairs which would have more than satisfied his highest ambition. Through all, however, he continued to be attached to her who had tempted him to his ruin. There is something touching in his love and pride for this selfish woman to the very last of his ill-ordered career, despite her wayward humors and ungentle moods towards him. Just before his death, he took up a tile and called to her "Come here, wife; I will take your portrait that all may see how well you have preserved your looks even at this age." But whether from caprice or that the allusion to her matured years overbalanced the compliment to her beauty, she pettishly refused, and so he drew that last sad portrait of himself instead, now in the Uffizi, in which his altered mien and for-

tunes have come down to us as a moral legacy. Shortly after this ungracious passage towards her husband she committed her final one, of leaving him when attacked by the plague to die in wretched solitude, without the poor consolation of breathing his last in the arms of her he had loved so weakly, and indeed "almost without any one being aware of it," as Vasari says, except the Barefooted Brethren of the Servites, who buried him with scanty ceremony. The tougher Lucrezia survived for forty years, but we hear nothing more of her subsequent career, except that she received, what she little deserved, certain money due Andrea at his decease.

Andrea, as an artist, was in high repute in his own day. His fame has always been upon the same level, suffering no fluctuations, for it is founded upon qualities readily understood and appreciated. Few artists have ever enjoyed more and superior opportunities for wealth and distinction. He was attached to his profession, a close student; when free from his evil genius, working incessantly and making satisfactory progress. The public gave him abundantly of that kind of appreciation which cheers and stimulates more than money. Michel Angelo said to Raphael of him, though doubtless more to mortify his amiable rival than to exalt Andrea, "There is a little fellow in Florence, who, if he had the opportunities that you have for great undertakings, would compel you to look well about you." Indeed he was enough praised, had he been a vain man, to have turned his head and made him think himself upon the same level with those great masters. He has always remained a favorite with the public at large. But the shadow that passed over his soul after his marriage so darkened his spirit that whatever elevation of mind might have been developed under more favorable auspices from out of his



impressible nature was forever lost to him, and he never manifested his full intellectual capacity. The seductions of his manner blind many to his real deficiencies. He painted with much freedom, sweetness, and grace. His modelling was excellent, draperies flowing and easy, action harmonious, and his management of chiaroscuro and soft interblending of tints, giving a misty, poetical, sensuous atmosphere to his pictures, very attractive. Whenever the moral faculties are dark or clouded, the tendency to confusion of colors is obvious in artists, resulting in puzzling, vapory tones, sometimes beautiful, as if the halo of truth was seeking to force its rays through the fog of the senses. This is seen particularly in those in whom, like Andrea, there is at bottom an undeniable instinct for better things, choked though it may be by the grosser manifestations of character. Piero di Cosimo, Bazzi, and Andrea del Sarto are a middle class of colorists; equally removed from the spiritual hues of the school of Fra Angelico on the one side, and of the ruffian sensualists that disgraced the Neapolitan on the other. There are artists of the quality of Leonardo and the Bolognese eclectics, in whom the intellectual elements dominate, their coloring being a pictorial transcript of their reason; each hue the result of study, experiment, and scientific deduction. They incline to coldness and abstraction, and the pleasure or dislike they inspire depends upon our mental appreciation of their works. They seldom excite feeling, but often admiration, for it is rarely that they are able to infuse the intellectual element with such emotional power, as by their just balance to arrive at that unity of expression which makes perfect art.

In dignity, versatility, and purity of conception, Andrea's earlier compositions are his best. At no time did he manifest great power and scope. His frescoes in the Annun-



ciata are picturesque, varied, and beautiful; vigorously naturalistic, with much good taste in the accessories, graceful grouping, and lively movement. His motives are frequently composite, influenced by each branch of the great Florentine school. He attains, however, to a marked individuality of style, with which numerous artists of less talent became greatly enamored, and which retains its popularity to this day. He is wanting in depth, earnest purpose, and seriousness. In his later years he became more or less mannered, chiefly in attitudes, though his design seldom was other than correct and forcible, and his execution free and delicate. With his vivacity and sensibility he is always pleasing. Towards the close of his life he verged on superficiality in thought and execution. One detects in him the seeds of the decline in painting which ultimately settled upon Tuscany. Yet when he chose, he could so closely imitate the manner of Raphael as to deceive the best judges. Contrasted with the noblest art of his country, then in its prime, it is surprising that he should have been called "Andrea the faultless;" exaggerated praise, which must have sprung from a change in the public taste not for the better. His many merits will, however, always conserve to him an honorable rank in art. He is best seen in the Pitti Gallery, which, in view of the number of his masterpieces it contains, might be considered as his monument. His misfortunes, temptations, and desolate end will also ever excite in the public heart a sympathy for the man.

Andrea had many scholars and imitators, to whom must be attributed the larger part of the many paintings in all parts of Europe baptized with his name. One of the cleverest of these pupils, and who went to France with him, was Andrea Squazzella.

Franciabigio (1483–1524) was Andrea's attached friend and constant companion. Though by no means his equal, he approaches him closely in manner, as may be noticed in those frescoes in the Annunciata which he painted in amicable competition with him. He has not, however, his correctness of design, grace, and charm of color, nor as much vivacity and fertility of invention, though clever in all these points. The "Marriage of the Virgin" is a monument of his temper as well as his talents, the former being as decidedly artistic as the latter. In their eagerness to honor a festival, without consulting him, the monks took the liberty to expose to the multitude his and Andrea's frescoes, before his was ready for exhibition. No sooner did he hear what they had done, than he ran in hot haste to the spot, snatched up a hammer, beat to pieces the charming head of the Virgin, and with furious blows proceeded to ruin other portions of his work. The horrified brethren hearing the noise rushed to the rescue, and finally succeeded in dragging him off. But his indignation was so great that although they offered him a large sum to restore the picture he would never consent; and as no other artist has ever been bold enough to undertake it, the injury remains as fresh as if done yesterday.

Yet the chronicler naïvely adds, "This master was a great lover of peace, and for that reason would never marry, but was often heard repeating the trite proverb,

‘He who takes a wife  
May be sure of cares and strife.’ ”

A natural conclusion for the most intimate friend of Andrea! Perhaps Franciabigio's own shoulders had received some of the vixenish blows which the ungente Lucrezia, with "evil words and spiteful actions," was wont to administer to the disciples of her husband, who living

“in the midst of all that torment yet accounted it a high pleasure.” \*

Il Rosso, who died in 1541, and Domenico Puligo (1475-1527) are also of this school. The former in his best pictures closely resembles Andrea, but without his charm of manner. His masterpiece is in the Pitti, in an unfavorable light between two windows, and therefore seldom noticed, though at a casual glance it would be mistaken for one of Andrea's. His hot, reddish tints, however, invariably betray their real author. Puligo's Holy Families also have much resemblance to those of Andrea del Sarto, though darker and more misty in coloring, and without equal delicacy of chiaroscuro. He is not a pleasing artist, and had no real devotion for art, painting chiefly to raise money for his sensual pleasures, and finally died of the plague caught in the house of a mistress.

The most distinguished of Andrea's disciples was Jacobo Carucci da Pontormo (1493-1558). His career commenced brilliantly. He manifested so much force and originality as to win the highest commendations from Raphael and Michel Angelo, the latter saying, “If this youth lives, and goes on as he has begun, he will carry this art to the very skies.” Indeed Andrea seemed to think so too, for he grew so jealous of his talents as to drive him from his studio. But this youthful promise was not confirmed by his maturity. In his best specimens he is grander than his master, more inventive, not inferior in sentiment or coloring, and has bolder relief. His intense solicitude for technical excellence led him to neglect the greater for the less. Lacking self-reliance or artistic courage, he was constantly imitating others, at one time adopting an incongruous manner by introducing the motives and

\* Vasari, first edition.

style of the German artists into those in which he had been trained, and not unfrequently captivated by the works of men of much inferior capacity to himself. Beside the false roads by which he was led astray, he had the habit of undoing his work and recommencing it, continually changing without advancing.

If the eccentricities \* of artists ever find a historian,

\* We get a capital idea of the character of the amusements of the Florentine artists and "fast men" at this time from the following description of a festival, taken from the *Life of Giovan Francesco Rustici*, the sculptor and architect, a great friend of Leonardo, and member of the eccentric society called "The Trowel."

"Another time, and when Matteo da Panzano was master of the feast, the supper was ordered after the following manner. Ceres, seeking Proserpine, her daughter, who had been carried off by Pluto, entered the apartment where in all the men of 'The Trowel' were assembled, and presenting herself before the Signore, begged that he with his guests would be pleased to accompany her to the infernal regions. To this request, after much discussion, the Society consented, agreeing to follow her guidance. They then proceeded to a darkened chamber, where, in place of a door, they found the open mouth of a serpent, the head of which filled all one side of the room. While assembled around this door, Cerberus barking furiously, Ceres inquired if her lost child were there. Upon being told that she was, the mother replied that she desired to receive her daughter back.

"But Pluto refused to give her up; at the same time he invited Ceres and her friends to the nuptials, which were then about to be solemnized. Accepting the invitation, they all passed through the serpent's mouth, which was armed with teeth, and, opening and shutting on hinges, permitted only two of the guests to pass at a time. By degrees, however, the whole assembly got in, when they found themselves in a vast chamber of a circular form, which had but one small glimmer of light in the centre, and this burnt so faintly that the guests could not distinguish each other without difficulty. Here they were forced into their seats, which surrounded a table covered with black, by a most hideous-looking devil, who drove each to his place with a huge toasting-fork. Pluto, however, commanded that, in honor of his wedding, the pains of hell should cease during all the time that the guests remained.

"Around the chamber there were painted the horrible places and caverns of the regions of the damned, with their terrific pains and torments. In an instant, and with the swiftness of a flash of lightning, fire being set to a match prepared for the purpose, there sprang up flames in each of those cavernous dungeons, disclosing the frightful manner in which the dwellers in those dismal abodes were tormented.

"The viands of this infernal supper were all presented under the forms of the most abominable, disgusting, and repulsive-looking animals; though be-

Pontormo's will figure largely. He was very provoking to self-inflated, would-be patrons, and wealthy amateurs desirous of his paintings, not excepting Octavio de' Medici. From them he was accustomed absolutely to refuse orders at any price, while accepting commissions at inferior rates from the common people, and taking the greatest possible

neath the hideous covering of pastry or other materials there were in fact concealed the most exquisite meats, in the richest and most costly variety. The skin and the external parts caused these eatables to appear like serpents, adders, lizards, newts, great venomous spiders, toads, frogs, scorpions, bats, and animals of similar kind, which were to be forced upon the guests. These were placed before each guest with a fire-shovel, under the direction of the huge devil before mentioned, while a comrade of his brought wines of the finest qualities in vessels of hideous forms, and these he poured into ladles looking like such as are used for melting glass, and which served the guests as beakers. After these first dishes, sweetmeats and fruits were placed on the table as if the supper was already finished; but these fruits and confections, which were cast about and rudely scattered all over the table, were apparently relics of the dead, although in fact the seeming bones were most delicate compositions of sugar, &c. This being done, command was given by Pluto (who announced that he was then going to his repose) to the effect that the ordinary pains should recommence, and the condemned be tormented anew; whereupon the lights by which the places of torture had been previously shown were instantaneously extinguished, ay, in the twinkling of an eye, and at the same moment there arose sounds of infinite horror, groans of the suffering, fearful cries, and exclamations full of terror. Then, in the midst of that darkness, and holding a faint light which did but just permit him to be seen, appeared the form of Baja, the artillery-man, who was one of the guests, but who had now been condemned to hell by Pluto, because in preparing fireworks and 'girandole' he had always confined his inventions to a representation of the seven mortal sins, and things appertaining to the realms of the infernal king.

"While all were occupied with that spectacle and in listening to those outcries, lamentations, and moanings, the whole of the grisly sight was swept away, and lights then appearing, there was seen in its stead the most royal and magnificent preparation for a supper, which was instantly laid with all respect by well-appointed and watchfully obedient servants. At the end of the feast, a ship laden with choice confections appeared, and this the masters thereof, as men who were selling their merchandise, distributed among the company; when all the viands were thus disposed of, the guests were conducted into the upper rooms, where a much renowned comedy called 'Philogenia,' for which very splendid and beautiful decorations had been prepared, was performed; after which all departed, in the dawn of the morning, having been infinitely delighted, to their respective homes."



pains to give them his best work. At the same time he was so adverse to society of any kind that he built a chamber in his house which could be entered only through a trap-door, by means of a ladder, which he drew up after him. He lived entirely alone, dispensing even with a cook. Without being miserly, he was frugal, amiable, and unenvious of success in others; greatly beloved by those whose intimacy he admitted, always respected for his indisputable talents, and at his death was borne to the grave by all of his professional brethren, sincerely lamenting his departure.



## CHAPTER XIII.

The three great Representative Painters of the Past Epochs. The three great Masters of the Climax of Italian Painting. Confession and Plea of the Author. Leonardo da Vinci, 1452-1519, the Complete Artist. His Person, Acquirements, Genius, and Character. As a Scientist, Philosopher, and Artist. His own Preference. Maxims and Methods. His Feminine Ideal. The "Last Supper." Mode of Composition. Master of Expression. Portraiture. Rarity of his Works. Illness and Death. Religious Sentiments and Will. Leonardo as a Failure and a Success. Time and Fortune envious of him. His Quarrel with Michel Angelo. Comparison between Giotto and Leonardo. Their respective Friends.

THREE great representative men in art, Giotto, Masaccio, and Fra Angelico, have appeared and passed away in that panorama of its Progress which we have sought to depict, leaving behind them ideas and principles that wondrously fructified and spread along the road of Time; some by natural growth, others by grafting, yielding a richly diversified harvest, though not incarnating themselves in other great, original forms, profound in the knowledge of the Past and quickened by that genius that of itself creates new and distinct epochs, until the æsthetic soil of old Etruria, ever so fertile in intellect, gave being to Leonardo da Vinci, Michel Angelo Buonarrotti, and Raffaello Santi, another illustrious triad, each embodying in a distinct manner not only all preceding progress, but giving to painting a climax of development as yet unsurpassed in its Christian phase. By representative men we mean more particularly those artists, each of whom, according to his epoch, originates and establishes some new and profound phase of

progress, complete in itself, and affording to his successors a standard of excellence and thoroughness of thought which for ages continues to be inexhaustible and unequalled. Such an one centres in himself vast and varied powers, joined to a distinctness of aim, founded upon a superior comprehension of the compass and meaning of art. Moreover his genius impels him onward with the force of an irresistible will. All men find in the completeness of such an artist something alike pleasurable and intelligible ; but only to those with a kindred measure of soul is it given to appreciate the full scope of his being. Broad minds grasp truths both broad and particular ; while narrow minds see only those points towards which their own personal little-nesses of liking gravitate. And in listening to criticism on art the inquirer should not only test its worth by the ability of the utterer to understand the whole spirit of the artist and to feel his purpose, but to at once instinctively fix the mind of that artist on the exact level of its quality of thought and feeling.

The intellectual and technical expansion of art suggested by Giotto and Masaccio, yielded its ripened fruit in the great names above given. Fra Angelico stands too far away, the representative of the purest spirituality, to be intimately classed with the other two. His was a special gift ; a supernal vision as exceptional as it was holy. He still remains the most elevated standard of pietism in art, largely influencing subsequent work born of like inspiration. Therefore, while confessing the triumph of Leonardo, Raphael, and Michel Angelo in every other phase of artistic growth over their predecessors, to Fra Angelico must still be reserved the power of that sentiment that made his art savor more of heaven than earth. Praying, fasting, and meditating intently on divine things, his pencil was moved by

ecstatic vision, and he saw the heavens opened ; chariots of fire and its angelic hosts. They went out into the world of nature to read its lessons, cull its forms, and learn its language. While seeking to vitalize their work with its appropriate thought and feeling, their models were chiefly drawn from the visible and tangible about them, under the strict governance of science ; the imagination being kept, as it were, as a reserved fountain of idealization, suggesting that which science was called upon to execute. In some respects, as will be shown in its proper place, Michel Angelo in his best moments is akin to Fra Angelico in the power of the spiritual faculty ; for although their forms so widely differ, yet they largely partake of a similar *degree* — not *quality* — of idealization, in both it being projected from the artist's interior sense or vision. The imaginative faculty in all of them was varied, vigorous, and inventive ; neither wanton, eccentric, nor exaggerated, but subdued to reason, and thus giving a beautiful soul to their creations. Hence they convince as well as excite. As with all well-balanced master-minds, they handled their faculties knowingly and well, feeling being subordinate to intellect, yet retaining its legitimate influence over it. But what was easy and natural in them, in their followers ultimately degenerated into the extinction of sentiment and the reduction of painting to a system of barren intellectual and mechanical formulæ, such imaginations as they had being painfully worked, as a gold-seeker does his placer with rocker and sifter and far-brought water, to find perchance some stray grains of gold. In consequence, while the action of the former was spontaneous and noble, that of their mere imitators became in time artificial and ignoble, because, without genius to discern the true and create the beautiful, conceiving that art was the result of mere method, to be

acquired by a fixed routine of study and practice, servilely adhering to chosen examples, they stumbled into all manner of technical exaggerations and weaknesses, more repulsive by far than the primitive ignorance of design of earlier art, which, however much it caricatured the human form divine, still endowed it with soul, while its wretched successor, at the other extreme of painting, left humanity not formless but void.

In conformity with the rule we have adopted in previous sketches of artistic character, a limited space confining us to mere touches of light and shade, inadequate to other than a brief, dynamic, chronological view of its technical and psychological aspects, unsatisfactory in comparison with the real importance of the subject but perhaps quite enough to fatigue the good-nature of the general reader, we shall condense as much as possible the notices of Leonardo and his companions. In verity, each of their lives is of itself a historic epoch in art, and although many volumes have been written thereon, a perfect understanding of their relation to the civilization of their times and influence upon subsequent art has yet to be given to the world. Restricted to a few pages, can we sketch their personal and æsthetic characteristics with justice to them and clearness to those whose taste for the topic has fortified their patience thus far? A writer on art in America has need of hope and courage, quite as much as of conscience and zeal. Hope to sustain him in face of the unpalatable fact that, unlike almost any other department of literature, he has but a very limited audience, with the certainty of having to provide at his own expense the intellectual repast he offers, be its quality what it may, and courage for two reasons of greater cogency. First, his subject addresses itself to the most cultivated classes, and therefore the most

exacting ; while from its alliance to taste, the laws of which are still so unshaped, he attracts to himself as it were a guerilla war of criticism, rather than systematic attack based upon generally acknowledged principles. Secondly, and of far greater weight, is the fear that arises within himself, in treating so familiarly of those whose earthly careers have long since blended into the romance quite as much as the histories of the Past, especially when they embrace such wide and diversified feelings and opinions, foreign in tongue, habits, race, and religion to his own, that he may, however scrupulous, not discern the entire truth, or, discerning, fail from poverty of language in making it plain to others, and thus, though guiltless in intention, mislead in fact, to the wrong of those whose articulate speech will never again be heard amongst us. Their memories are a sacred trust for our welfare, if their good survive them ; and if evil, duty requires the notes of warning to be sounded in the ears of to-day, that we may not repeat their experience. Most discouraging of all is the consciousness of fuller desire than power to present the claims of art, and to picture the enjoyment it confers upon those who sympathetically greet it. But this or other discouragement shall not hinder us from casting our mite into the intellectual treasury of our country ; sustained, nay more, urged on, by the reward the subject itself has conferred upon our own increased sources of instruction and happiness. Surely we do not impose upon our fellow-citizens, if, to an æsthetic bias having added many years, study and experience at the fountain-heads of noble art, we ask them, with all due deference to the more engrossing pursuits which have hitherto engaged their faculties, to accept our voluntary labors. Haply amongst them there will arise those who to equal feeling will add superior at-



tainments, and thus make good to the public the deficiencies of this work. With this digression, taking fresh heart, we proceed to that point of view of our subject which is the richest and most difficult to successfully portray; the more important, as being its highest point of intellectual development. When it passed, the decadence of art in Tuscany was rapid and thorough.

The first in time and the greatest in personal advantages and mental acquirements of the three great masters who terminate the wonderful artistic epoch thus far traced is Leonardo da Vinci, the natural son of Piero da Vinci, a notary of Florence, born in the town of Vinci in the Valdarno, in 1452. Of him Vasari sententiously remarks, "The richest gifts are sometimes seen to be showered as by celestial influence on certain human beings; nay, they occasionally supernaturally and marvellously congregate in one sole person: beauty, grace, and talent being united in such a manner that to whatever the man thus favored may turn himself his every action is so divine as to leave all other men far behind him, and manifestly to prove that he has been specially endowed by the hand of God himself, and has not obtained his preëminence by human teaching or the power of man." An exordium which requires great *doing* to reconcile with the life of any mortal, but which our biographer affirms "was seen and admitted by all men in the person of Leonardo da Vinci."

More favored than Giotto, he had rare personal beauty, was exceedingly well made, so strong that he could twist a horseshoe with his fingers, and perform other muscular feats far beyond the force of even powerful men. He excelled in courtly and athletic exercises, the use of arms and horsemanship, which last gave him great delight. His comeliness and strength were however the least of his per-



sonal attractions. "The radiance of his countenance brought cheerfulness to the hearts of the most melancholy," and his persuasive voice could "move the most obstinate" to say "No" or "Yes," as he willed. But even his fascination of manner and seductive conversation were excelled by his skill in argument. None could withstand his logic. Princes and beggars, wise men or fools, were alike captivated by his varied acquirements, which he gracefully adapted to any society or circumstance, without compromising his own dignity or morals. Lomazzo tells us that he sometimes invited peasants to supper, entertaining them with such comical stories as to cause immoderate laughter, for the purpose, after their withdrawal, of making studies from memory of their extraordinary contortions and extravagant mirth. His drawings show his wonderful skill in this respect and in caricature. But his social predilections were for those who were distinguished for learning, talents, or goodness. Hospitable and generous, he made no distinctions under his own roof between the rich and poor, provided they were worthy of his esteem. He lived handsomely, keeping many domestics and horses. Of animals he was very fond, treating them with great kindness. Indeed he had a habit of going to the bird-market, buying up the little captives, and restoring them to liberty.

With his advantages of person, position, and charm of manner, he could not have failed in captivating the sex that prize these qualities most highly. Yet he never married, nor is there any ground for believing that he ever formed an attachment, platonic or otherwise, for any female. Surrounded as he was by the beautiful wantons of the court of Ludovico il Moro, whose portraits he was required to paint, beside those of virtuous and cultivated ladies, this indifference is somewhat remarkable. Neither history nor tradition-

ary gossip, so far as we can trace, attribute to him an amour of any kind, or the slightest influence over him of womanly attractions. In this respect he removes himself from the common sympathy of humanity. No doubt it was the result of his predominating intellectual organization, which kept his passions comparatively feeble or dormant, though his sentiments were kindly to all. In fact he concentrated his affections upon no person, nor upon any special object. And in a great measure it must be owing to this want of passionate energy and special ambition that his extraordinary, nay unique, genius never produced the complete and durable results which its capacity and comprehensiveness would seem to authorize the world to expect.

Leonardo was born with extraordinary and varied faculties of mind. When but a small boy he puzzled his teachers by his remarks and questions, passing with perfect ease and intelligence from one pursuit to another, without fixing his attention long upon any subject. Facility, ingenuity, versatility, industry, inquisitiveness, boldness, and thoroughness; a prodigious memory, a plastic will, a rich, creative imagination and inexhaustible capacity of invention, a predominating reason holding all these intellectual and executive resources in perfect control, undisturbed or misled by illusions, operating with mathematical certainty, and sustained by a physical organization as strong and healthful as it was beautiful and untainted by vice; such was the fundamental force and universality of this wonderful being, who was perhaps the most *completely* endowed man by nature of all time. Whatever he turned his mind to he promptly mastered. His weakness lay in the variety and range of his genius. Hence a craving to prove all things; a constant desire of experiment and new acquirements, begetting a certain instability of purpose and frequent changes

of pursuits, in any one of which he equalled or excelled his contemporaries, without bestowing upon it the full measure of his capacity. In reality he was embarrassed by his extraordinary mental wealth and power of choice of greatness; whilst his special need was that concentrated ambition which, fired by powerful passions, inevitably leads on to grand undertakings and commensurate results. Even as it was, his piercing inductive intellect anticipated in physical science many of the important truths, discoveries, and inventions which have since brought wealth and honor to inferior minds. Alexander von Humboldt considers him to be "the greatest physical philosopher of the sixteenth century." Unfortunately he buried his scientific lore and pre-science in almost illegible manuscripts, written with his left hand from right to left, and which were bequeathed to the patience and skill of subsequent times, more disposed to do him justice than he was himself, to bring to light.\*

His mental bias was in fact more towards science than art. This is evident from his long and varied labors as a civil and military engineer, his novel and useful inventions, the general tenor of his experiments and studies, and indeed in his methods of art. History and antiquities also occupied his attention, but with special reference to utilizing the experience of the ancients for the benefit of the moderns. But it is out of our scope to follow him further as a philosopher or scientist. Accordingly, let us turn to that department of his universal genius in which he is most popularly known; namely, that of the Artist.

In this respect his range was equally broad. In music

\* "The copious fragments of his MSS. lying inedited in the Parisian libraries would be sufficient if published to operate a revolution in our ideas concerning the history of modern discovery." *Italy*, L. Mariotti, vol. ii. p. 158. He even had the idea to employ steam as a propelling power. See *Libri*, vol. iii.

he excelled the best professors at the court of Milan, in a trial of skill before the Duke. His instrument, constructed by himself, was a silver lute, shaped externally like a horse's head, and provided with an ingenious mechanism to give additional force and sweetness to the notes. He sung "divinely," improvising at the same moment the music and verses. Of his poetry but one specimen, preserved by Lomazzo, has reached us. It savors more of philosophy than the muses, and more of ethics than either. An English version by Mrs. Foster renders it as follows.

"If what thou wouldst thou canst not, then content thee  
To will as thou mayst act. It is but folly  
To will what cannot be : soon learns the wise  
To wrest his will from bootless wishes free.

"Our bliss and woe depend alike on knowledge  
Of what we should do, and, that known, to do it.  
But he alone shall compass this who never  
Doth warp his will when right before him stands.

"All he can do, man may not safely will.  
Oft seemeth sweet what soon to bitter turns.  
How have I wept of some fond wish possessed !

"Thou, therefore, reader of these lines, wouldst thou  
Count with the good and to the good be dear ?  
Will only to be potent for the right."

Architect, sculptor, or painter, poet or musician, whichever path of art allured him, Leonardo had but to exercise his will and he was equal to the occasion ! Kugler considers that "the centre of all the various powers of this great man was his love for plastic art." We do not agree with him. The utility principle of the mechanical arts had a stronger attraction for him. His was emphatically a mathematical, constructive, and inventive mind. This predilection not only diverted him from plastic art, but when occupied with it and painting, by seducing him into

experiments upon vehicles, the practice of new and untried methods, and overmuch attention to his preparations, needlessly consumed his time, and hindered the development of his imagination, though his genius was capable of equal exertion at the same time in the greatest efforts of practical science and creative art when necessity prompted. The canal of Mortesana, which brings the waters of the Adda across the arduous mountain-passes of the Valtellina and through the territory of the Chiavenna for more than two hundred miles, was achieved whilst he was painting his "Last Supper." The construction of canals, fortifications, bridges, machinery, the tunnelling and removing of mountains, cleansing and deepening of harbors, raising of ponderous weights, swimming and flying machines, compasses, hygrometers; in fine, whatever favored science and material civilization, he earnestly devoted his attention to. When matters of practical importance failed him, he devised curious and ingenious toys, or amused himself in making flying figures, and even in taming a nondescript lizard, for which, by the aid of quicksilver, he adapted wings, that when the reptile moved had motion and appeared real. Adding horns, a beard, and ghoul-like eyes, he made its entire aspect so frightful that when his visitors unexpectedly came upon it they fled in alarm. His own letter to Duke Ludovico, recommending himself, dwells with complacent emphasis upon the "secrets" he has discovered in mechanics; his ability as a civil and military engineer and architect; and adds, almost parenthetically, "furthermore, I can execute works in sculpture, marble, bronze, or terracotta. In painting, also, I can do what may be done as well as any other, be he who it may;" — a bold self-estimate of a man of thirty. The letter was written in 1483, the year of Raphael's birth, and before Michel Angelo had



become known as an artist; but it was justified by the quality and results of his genius.

Without further indications of his own preferences, he was ready, as he expresses himself in that manly epistle, to execute whatever of science or art a competent patron would give him to do; the latter, however, always subordinated to the laws of the former. Feeling never weakened him nor led him astray from the strictest naturalistic truth. He learned anatomy, animal and human, by dissection; his taste for this study being fostered by the example and instruction of Verrocchio. The by-gestures, looks, and expressions of all classes of people, scenes in public or private life, the pangs of remorseful or hardened dying criminals, whatever was ridiculous, striking, or impressive, he carefully sketched from nature at the moment in a note-book always at hand. Neither was the inanimate world overlooked. No phenomena or facts of color, design, perspective,—in short, nothing whatever that he could infuse effectively into his art, escaped his vigilant observation. The result of these studies he incorporated into a manuscript “Treatise on Painting,” which has since been published in several European languages, in various illustrated editions, being still used as a text-book.\* The eighth chapter gives the key to his method. “A painter should be universal. He must study all he sees; that is to say, consider it attentively, and by serious reflection seek to find the cause of that which he sees; but he should only take that which is the best and most perfect for his work. Thus, as a mirror reflects all objects with their particular colors and characters, *the imagination of a painter accustomed to reflect* will represent to him without difficulty all that is most beautiful in nature.” †

\* Vide *Memorie Storiche su la Vita de Leonardo da Vinci* da Carlo Amoretti. Milan, 1804. *Traité de la Peinture de Léonard de Vinci*. Paris, 1803.

† Some of his rules of painting may interest even the general reader as hints



Reflection, law, analysis, synthesis; nothing permitted to Feeling until sanctioned by Reason: such is his system of art. "No painter should imitate another," he remarks. "Always have recourse to Nature—consult her for everything." This is the key to his own style. His instructions are prosaically minute. He sanctions no haste or shirk-

for the better understanding of its technical execution. He divides his Treatise into very brief chapters. In chap. 178 he says: "The first object of a painter is to make a simple flat surface appear like a relievo and some of its parts detached from the ground. He who excels in this deserves the greatest praise. This perfection depends upon the correct distribution of lights and shades, called *chiaroscuro*."

Chap. 193. "Contrive that your figures receive a broad light from above, particularly in portraits, because we see people in the street receive all the light from above. It is curious to observe, that there is not a face ever so familiar but would be recognized with difficulty were it lighted from beneath." "Do not make muscles with hard lines," (this was the practice of his master Verrocchio, the Pollajuoli, and their contemporaries,) "but let the soft light glide upon them and blend into delightful shadows; this gives grace and beauty to the face."

Chap. 234. "Black is the most beautiful in the darks, white in the strongest lights, blue and green in the half-tints, yellow and red in the principal light, gold in the reflexes, and lake in the half-tint."

Leonardo was constantly experimenting to find means of giving extraordinary projection to his figures, and, never contented with his darkest shadows or grounds, earnestly sought for still darker tones, hoping in the end to discover a black that should produce a deeper shadow and be yet darker than all known blacks, so that the lights by contrast would be more lucid and forcible. He did succeed in producing a dark ("*couleur bitumineuse*") in which there is absolutely no light left, as may be seen in some of his pictures, which have become injured from this very cause; the dark ground preparations by the action of time showing through the superimposed color, confusing outlines and producing a general obscurity, greatly to the detriment of those effects which he aimed to secure, and which, could he have insured his colors against the chemical action of time, would have been permanent.

Chap. 263. "Avoid making dark outlines—do not make the boundaries of your figures with any other color than that of the background on which they are placed."

Chap. 271. "For harmony of colors contrast blue with pale yellow or white; green near red—a pale yellow will cause red to appear more beautiful than if opposed to purple."

Chap. 181. "Take care that the shadows and lights be united, or lost in each other, without any hard strokes or lines—as smoke loses itself in air."

Chap. 191. "Light admitted in front of heads situated opposite to side walls that are dark will cause them to have great relief, particularly if the light be









ing. Deep study, acute observation, unwearied application, — these are his own attributes, and he enforces their value upon others. Yet with all this elaboration of work, few apparently might have been more independent of long forethought and tedious progress, for his creative capacity was profound, original, and full of vitality. Not only was

placed high. When it comes from on high it does not strike on every part of the face alike, but one part produces great shadows upon another — the light, concentrated upon the most projecting parts, produces great relief."

It is curious to observe in his "Holy Family," plate N, figs. 40 and 41, how literally, even to contrast of colors, the above rules have been adhered to, resulting in precisely the effects he strives for, plus the deepening of the darks and the increased impression of outlines from the shadows having grown more obscure by time, producing an effect beyond the power of the mere imitator or copier to rival, so that these very defects are an additional guarantee of the authenticity of the picture, which otherwise is in a perfect and intact condition. Its unfinished heads, mingled strength, fineness, and firmness of touch, minuteness without littleness in the details of the background, are equally characteristic of him. Among his not unfrequent repetitions of this subject he speaks of two himself, in 1507, in letters from Florence to Francesco Melzi and Girolamo Casano at Milan, (Gaye, *Carteggio*, vol. ii. pp. 96, 97,) as being of "different sizes," which he has commenced and nearly finished — "*che io ho cominciati*;" and "*che me sono avanzati, condotti in assai buon punto*." No traces of these two are now known, unless this be one of them; the more probable account is that it was preserved until 1852 in a family living within a few miles of Vinci, who left it by testament to a gentleman of Florence, from whose hands it passed into ours by means of one intermediate. The composition is wholly original. The magnificent relief of the head of the Child, its perfect design, intense, far-reaching expression, as if its sad earthly destiny was even now laid open to its soul, can be the production of no less a hand than his. For further particulars of this painting, see sundry documents attached to the Catalogue in the Appendix.

Vasari, in his life of Leonardo, says that he painted a small picture for Messer Baldassare Turini, of Pescia, datary to Leo X., "the subject, 'Our Lady with the Child in her lap.' It was executed with infinite care and art, but whether from the carelessness of those who prepared the ground, or because of his peculiar and fanciful mixtures of colors, varnishes, etc., it is now damaged." This "Holy Family" is also missing; and in respect to the composition of the child in the lap and the peculiar changes in the coloring, it agrees with the one in our possession, though there is no further evidence of their identity.

The plate is so faulty in design, giving such an inadequate idea of the picture, that at first it was condemned; but as it represents the composition, and the original is now on view in America, it was finally admitted.



he eminent in investing his compositions with a wonderful unity of intellectual and technical character, but he could compose new forms, as it were, for nature, unlike any of her known creations, and yet in such apparent harmony with her ways that in admiring their strength and beauty, and interpreting their meaning, we lose sight of their impossibility. Of this nature is his sketch of his wondrous "Dragons at play" in the Uffizi, unique for its weird power.

Leonardo owes nothing to classical art. Nor is there evidence of his studying that of his own epoch. Indeed, we have just seen that he virtually forbids it in his instructions to others. At his first boyish effort, as was recorded in the notice of Verrocchio, he surpassed his instructor, at least so the latter despairingly acknowledged. While all contemporary artists considered his paintings as a fountain-head of knowledge, he remained independent of them all; finding inspiration within himself and acknowledging nature only as his teacher. Had no art ever existed, he would have created it from out of the suggestions of the world of idea within and of fact without him. And in rightly estimating his strength, we must not forget that he preceded Raphael and Michel Angelo by almost one generation. He could therefore learn but little of them, while they had his matured genius as a stimulant and to profit by in their works. The friends and contemporaries of Leonardo were Perugino, Credi, Botticelli, and Fra Bartolomeo; so that if any comparison with contemporary art were to be instituted, it must be with them, and not with the first-named artists.

Vigorous and spontaneous as Leonardo's powers eminently were, he trained them to scrupulous and conscientious labor, leaving no latitude to impulse or chance effort.

Those who would fain persuade themselves that genius is born with matured wisdom and skill, needing but to open its mouth to "ravishingly" sing or to lift its hand to "divinely" execute, should particularly note his example. With unsurpassed mental and physical gifts, he steadily and patiently studied and toiled to attain his ideal of truth and beauty. The law of perfection is indeed founded on imperative labor; but with him more freedom would have been our great gain. For his sensitiveness to improvement was so acute that he protracted his work almost endlessly, always finding something to amend, which dilatoriness and inability to satisfy himself frequently operated to prevent him altogether from its completion, particularly if new engagements or a change of residence intervened. Besides, he frittered away time and power over material, his preparations and vehicles both for his "Last Supper" and the great fresco designed for the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence being experimentative, to the lasting detriment of the one and the prevention of the execution of the other, although the cartoon had been made and exhibited, and the citizens desired its completion "to the end that the commonwealth might have the glory and the city the ornament imparted by the genius, grace, and judgment of Leonardo to all that he did." \* He intended to have painted this last, as in fact he unfortunately did the "Cenacolo," in oil, to gain greater power over color and details, but owing either to badly prepared grounds or some inherent defect in the plaster itself, his painting sunk into it so much that he abandoned it altogether. Misfortunes of this nature were constantly worrying him, but his masterpiece at Milan might have still continued to give to the world some faint idea of its original perfection, had not humidity, the vandalism of

\* Vasari, vol. ii. p. 385.

monks and military authorities, and repainting, all combined to hasten its destruction.

Leonardo's taste inclined rather more to sculpture than to painting. In the latter he sought with great success to render in relief the force of the former, by the means he records in his Treatise, and which we have quoted in part. These, with his perfect modelling and firm design, gave extraordinary roundness and projection to those of his figures he considered as finished. Lomazzo limits the number of heads to four, though this seems improbable. Without doubt his critical eyes would never have been entirely satisfied with any degree of progress, for they could always suggest the possibility of more. He instructed his pupils to make a cautious use of lights, using white as if it were a paste of gems, reserving it always for the strongest effects and highest reliefs. Owing to the peculiar and novel preparations of many of his grounds the darks of some of his pictures have grown too obscure and even opaque, to the loss of their primitive transparency of shadow. He finished backgrounds and the least important portions of a picture first, gradually arriving at the principal features, with a microscopic fineness of touch, bestowing the nicest attention upon each accessory, reproducing not merely the minutest character of anatomy but the actual lucidity and moisture of flesh, avoiding at the same time the dryness and hardness of the German school. His works, in consequence, even when imperfect, if they have escaped retouching, bear the closest inspection; and in seeking absolute truth of detail he preserved a broad, masterly treatment of masses, so that they are as effective at a distance as pleasing near to, either point of view being equally sustained by his harmonious artistic unity of the minute and great in nature. He had another and more quiet man-

ner, exceedingly delicate and suggestive of life in its poetry of youth and loveliness, attained by a skilful management of middle tints.

Leonardo evinces a peculiar predilection for one type of male or female beauty, much alike in both, whenever he idealizes his conceptions. It is full of grace and refined, pure sentiment, verging upon weakness and languishment, and destitute of real spiritual elevation. His *Ledas*, *Virgins*, and favorite portraits have much resemblance in this respect, sweetly akin in beauty and feeling, without any approach to the sensual or scarcely the sensuous. They entwine themselves in our sympathies as beings to be cherished for the sake of their entire loveliness of person and character, as we love the grace and innocence of infancy. Look at his nude "*Leda*," the perfection of female form, far more beautiful than the over-praised *Venus de' Medici*, for the head harmonizes with the body; it speaks to us as an image of the first woman, fresh from God's creative hand, clad in the modesty of unconscious nakedness, and imparting to the spectator none other sense than that of adoring wonder at so beauteous a vision. His ideal females are the creations of a chaste soul united to a refined taste; not aspiring to the spiritual, nor descending to the level of common womanhood, yet true and substantial. To many they are unsatisfactory, not appealing enough to the usual associations of the sex. But they are such as an artist refraining from intimate relations with women, whether of love or friendship, might poetically conceive as his ideal; women without passion or sin; richly endowed with the purest sensibilities, equally capable of heroic suffering or tender sympathy; women in whom the possibility but not the probability of yielding up their all to love is apparent.

The feminine traits which so pleased him are reproduced

without much change in a number of his male heads, particularly of saints, but less to their advantage. Indeed we are inclined to think that his ideal lineaments of women were borrowed more from male than female models, conceiving perhaps with some philosophers that the perfect being unites within itself all that is noble and lovely in the elements of either sex. Certain it is that he was greatly attached to Francesco Melzi, as a child famed for beauty, and when old still handsome and exceedingly amiable. So also, for like cause, he conceived a great affection for his servant, Andrea Salai or Salaino, raising him to the condition of pupil, ever showing him the utmost kindness, and even assisting him in his paintings. Salaino was of Leonardo's favorite type of beauty, with long, wavy, auburn hair, descending in rich curls upon his shoulders. The sexual isolation of Leonardo, and his intimate association with men of amiable and refined character, undoubtedly confirmed his chaste disposition, and helped keep his pencil entirely free from that sensual art to which Raphael sometimes yielded, though there can be no doubt that the external pressure and temptation from a licentious court and society was as great upon one as the other. The children of Leonardo have an adult force of expression; their intense character and vigorous modelling contrasting powerfully with the pensive sweetness of their mothers.

His happiest union of creative thought with a scientific perception of nature, illumined by a power of imagination that exhausted without exaggerating his theme, in which all the elements of art are in thorough harmony, lofty significance, and pleasing naturalness, is the "Last Supper," at Milan, painted on the wall of the refectory of the convent of Sta. Maria delle Grazie, the figures being larger than life, but from their elevation appearing of the natural size. Beside



design and composition we have little left whereby to judge this noble performance. The subject theologically considered in relation to the divine mystery of an atoning sacrifice, of which it was both the anticipatory ceremony and a model feast as an example to Christians in all time to commemorate the "It is finished" of their Lord, is the most solemn and pathetic that history records. From the earliest ages a traditional composition had been bequeathed to art for it. Not only religious veneration prescribed its general arrangement, but local circumstances required that it should conform to the customary position of the monks at their long, narrow tables, seated as they usually were with their backs to the wall. The painting being composed in the same fashion, placed opposite and above them as they entered their dining-hall, recalled at each meal, for the salvation of those who confessed that "Truly this was the Son of God," their Master's expiatory death, through the sordid treachery of a false disciple. Artists of every age had conformed to this plan, sometimes placing the Saviour at the upper end of the table with the beloved disciple leaning upon his bosom, and sometimes in the centre, his followers seated on either side. Giotto ventured to vary this arrangement in his miniature "Cenacolo" of the Academy at Florence by seating Judas conspicuously in front, and a little apart from the others, with pertinent action making his treachery as it were the most striking trait of his composition. Leonardo adhered strictly to the established usage, imparting to it a feeling and power such as no other artist has ever rivalled.

The "large upper room," its simple decorations, the distant view from the windows over the hills of Judah, and the sparse accessories of such a banquet, are in strict accordance with our usual interpretation of the Gospel narra-



tives. If the scene were treated with rigid historical fidelity, as Horace Vernet has attempted, it might be sunk into a company of Bedouin-looking individuals seated on the floor, dipping their hands, after the etiquette of Orientals, into a common dish and eating therefrom. It is probable that the reply of Jesus, instead of being intended, as is generally understood, to point out the traitor, was made to screen him, for as all present were or had just been dipping their hands into the dish with him, no one of the apostles but Judas himself could have absolutely known to whom it applied. Had fiery Peter been sure of the man, certainly he would not have allowed him to go out quietly to work the evil that he did. The several narratives are more or less confused. Leonardo, while adhering to its traditional aspect and common interpretation, ennobled it, by raising it above the commonplace on the one hand and avoiding on the other the bad taste and incongruous details of others, who overload the scene with unmeaning ornamentation, arabesques and grotesques, or degrade and change its sacred character by the introduction of vulgar incidents, the portraits and costumes of their times, and in fact turning it into a spectacle of vagaries and unseemly innovations which no degree of artistic cleverness can justify.

Here, Jesus and the twelve are alone. Leonardo does not admit even a single attendant. They are seated at a plain table, on which is spread a light repast. A few cups and dishes, on a linen cloth slightly ornamented for artistic value, scattered carelessly about, as if the modest feast was wellnigh done, are his only accessories. His draperies are nobly disposed, and in accordance with the supposed costumes of the age. The heads are ideal embodiments of the several characteristics of the apostles. Jesus is the central figure. His prophetic exclamation, "One of you shall

betray me," has filled the company with impassioned excitement. They turn to each other and the Saviour, alternating between horror, doubt, suspicion, and astonishment, eagerly questioning as to whom it applies. Some are stunned by the enormity of the charge; others are vociferous, indulging in violent gestures and powerful emotions: each betrays his appropriate temperament in corresponding speech and action, with a wonderfully varied rendering of individual character. Yet a masterly unity of feeling pervades the whole. The interest in the scene is regularly heightened through all the gradations of vehement passion and deep sorrow until it centres upon the group of the Saviour, meekly obedient to foreordained Destiny, and the tender John, overwhelmed by its sudden proximity, his sympathetic, loving anguish and saintly features contrasting with amazing truth of sentiment with the avaricious, hypocritical countenance of the betrayer. Judas sits next to John. A convulsive start has caused him unconsciously to overturn the ill-omened salt. His mean profile and sinister gaze are turned inquiringly upon his Master, watching for further indications of discovery, while his left hand involuntarily approaches the dish near to the right hand of Jesus that is about to betray him, by those memorable words, in answer to the earnest inquiry of all the others, "It is one that dip-peth with me in the dish."

The lineaments of that unparalleled head of Christ have become as familiar to the world as if he still walked in our midst. Judged by the strictest rules of art-composition, the entire work being a rare union of elevated sentiment and refined execution, the natural, historical, and religious harmoniously balanced alike in motive and dramatic expression, it is the most successful effort of Christian art; perhaps the most complete effort of all art. Yet in assert-

ing this we must keep in view the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and Raphael's frescoes in the Vatican, which are almost as perfect of their kind. Still no other picture so completely forestalls criticism in every point. Yet Leonardo did not undertake it with prayer and fasting. He did, however, so completely give himself up to his task that he often remained from morning to night without food, forgetting the cravings of appetite. It does not glow with the supernal element of the pietists. But it is the result of profound thought and acute observation; nature and history, prompted by imagination, supplying the models and motives.

Leonardo defines his method of composition in his answer to the Duke when accused by the Prior of dilatoriness and of passing half a day at a time absorbed in reflection before his work. "Men of genius," he observes, "are sometimes producing most when they seem to be laboring least, their minds being occupied in the elucidation of their ideas and in the completion of those conceptions to which they afterwards give form and expression with the hand;" adding, that "he was still in want of two heads, one of which, the Saviour's, he could not hope to find on earth, and he had not yet attained the power of presenting it to himself in imagination with all that perfection of beauty and celestial grace which appeared to him to be demanded for the representation of the Divinity incarnate. The second head still wanting was that of Judas, since he did not think it possible to imagine features that could graphically render the countenance of a man who, after so many benefits received from his Master, betrayed his Lord and the Creator of the world. With regard to the latter he would make search, and if he could not do better, after all there would remain to him the face of the

impertinent and annoying Prior." This humorous revenge freed him henceforth from the inane criticisms of his employer, much to the mirth of Ludovico. Leonardo never permitted any unworthy or extraneous motive to influence his conceptions, and he did not in this instance, as did Michel Angelo because of a remark reflecting upon his ideas of decorum, immortalize his captious critic with pictorial infamy.

Leonardo was master of the entire scope of human expression, from its meanest to its loftiest features. By his skill in design he played upon character, elucidating its every aspect, as a musician calls forth emotions by his power over sound. Virtue or vice; the ridiculous or extraordinary; the homely or the beautiful; rage, malice, or affright; chastity, peace, or joy; — in fine, the soul of man, was shaped by him at will in vigorous or graceful form and action, in perfect correspondence with the idea, with a scientific truthfulness never surpassed. For evidence of much of his ability recourse must be had to his drawings. His strength was peculiarly intellectual and under rigid control. Idiosyncrasies of no kind, as with Michel Angelo and Raphael, appear in his art. He abstracts self-hood completely from it, infusing instead, in its intensest mood, the spirit that should animate it as an independent, extraneous creation. Hence it is no revelation of the man Leonardo, but an abstract scientific projection of his artistic power. An idea given, and he at once incarnates it with such a degree of fidelity to its own laws of being that in the contemplation of its naturalness we forget the artist. Witness his "Struggle for the Standard," a marred fragment of that wonderful cartoon, heedlessly destroyed, of the victory of the Florentines over Niccolo Piccinino, General of Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, at Anghiari, in

1440, executed in competition with Michel Angelo, — who chose for his subject a scene in the Pisan campaign, — to adorn the Council Hall of the Palazzo Vecchio. The latter took the commencement of the battle; the former, the turning-point of victory. Both cartoons became schools of art, and greatly influenced its rapid naturalistic and historical development. Leonardo's horses and men are the very incarnations of the fury and fierceness—the animals rivaling the rage of their riders—of deadly strife for the most precious of military trophies. The intensity of the struggle is appalling. So is his "Medusa" a unique effect of the startling and horrible.

Of imitative work, the portrait of Mona Lisa is remarkable for its broad, masterly treatment of general features, combining nobility of form and sweetness of expression with the most delicate finish of details and exquisite modelling. His minute accuracy of surface has nothing in common with the repulsive, epidermical naturalism of the Denner school of portraiture; for his knowledge of form and color was tempered by his superior discernment of character. His flesh is virginly warm and tender, his anatomy and modelling the reproduction of nature itself; the beating of the arteries and movement of the chest are indicated; the lucidity of the eye, the flexible, soft quality of hair and its adhesion to the skin, the bony and muscular structure, — in fine, every element of nature's handicraft, to the strictest truth of likeness itself, without any approach to idealization, yet all harmonized into a head of exceeding interest, if not of beauty, was united in this portrait. Desiring to excite in his sitter the most pleasurable emotions, he amused her with the society of persons of wit and taste, and even brought in the aid of music to keep alive her smiles. It became in truth a labor of love, as if



he wished to test the entire imitative capacity of painting; for he fondly lingered over it four years, though in his own estimation he never finished it. Finally he took it with him to France, and sold it to Francis I. for a sum nearly equivalent to nine thousand dollars \* of our money, showing the value placed upon the painting by that kingly amateur. It is still to be seen in the Louvre, but time has left to it only the shadow of its former perfection.†

His own portrait in the Uffizi, with comparatively slight technical treatment, has a wonderful strength. Seldom it is that the light favors it, and pictures out of their proper point of view are in general worse than valueless, for they traduce the reputations of their authors. Yet this is the way in which they are usually exhibited, special pains seemingly being taken to exaggerate the unavoidable deficiencies of material and to thwart the artist in that precise point on which his legibility most depends. Repeated varnishes have also done much to disfigure this noble portrait. But in a favorable light it exhibits as positive a magic control over form and character, and the qualities of flesh, hair, and bone, as Titian exercises over color. Of still more value, there stands before us the vital effigy of this peerless man, the Father of artists, whether we regard his acquire-

\* Royal amateurs in classical times exceeded even modern extravagance in prices for coveted objects of art. Apelles received a sum equivalent to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for his portrait of Alexander. Attalus III., King of Pergamus, paid one hundred and twenty thousand dollars for a picture by Aristides. Augustus accepted the "Venus Anadyomene" of Apelles in lieu of a tribute due of nearly five hundred thousand dollars, or one hundred talents.

† Leonardo painted the wife of his friend Giocondo not only under several ideal forms but in one instance *nude*, to display her exquisite shape. The painting has disappeared, but its character is preserved in an engraving of the upper part of the figure, to be seen in the Gray Collection at the Library of Harvard University, Cambridge. The face, however, is not a pleasing one; the better qualities of female character being overpowered by fleshly charms and an almost unpleasing rotundity of features and limbs.



ments or his appearance ; an embodiment of mental power in a singularly beautiful form, to which those piercing eyes, aquiline nose, finely cut features, and wilderness of rich, long hair and venerable beard, give a patriarchal force and the intellectual glow of a higher sphere. And in estimating him, it must not be forgotten that the painter was but a fragment of the man.

Among other portraits, he is said to have done in crayon Amerigo Vespucci, and one Scaramuccia, the leader of a band of gypsies ; a wild character of special interest to him. In the difficulties of art he took a rare delight. We read of his painting for Francis I. a laughing Pomona, covered with *three* veils ; “as one can readily see,” “*cosa difficilissimo nell’ arte.*”

Leonardo’s authentic works are exceedingly rare and correspondingly prized. Yet as he was no idler, he must have produced many paintings or studies during the ten or twelve years he was at Florence. We have scarcely any details of this period of his life. Beside the cartoon already mentioned, his chief attempts in painting were the unfinished “Adoration of the Magi” of the Uffizi, and the two Holy Families he refers to in his letters as still unfinished, of which, possibly, that referred to in the Appendix is one. In 1482 he was invited to Milan by Ludovico Sforza, chiefly to make an equestrian statue to the memory of Francesco, the Duke’s father ; a gigantic monument, upon the execution of which Leonardo counted to carry out his ideas as a sculptor and to immortalize his name. He seems to have considered himself greater in sculpture than painting ; an opinion shared by those who were able to see what he could do in both.

Although not improvident or heedless of the value of money, Leonardo had neither the faculty of money-making

nor of money-keeping. During one winter he was reduced to such straits, by the neglect or inability of his ducal patron to provide for his wants, that he seriously entertained the idea of abandoning art altogether. Had he lived in our age he might have done this, and by the power of his mechanical genius alone secured to himself a prodigious fortune and conferred untold benefits upon our material civilization. Either in art or science, what he needed was a judicious patron or a stringent necessity, to properly work out the full extent of his intellectual resources. His will exhibits a scanty accumulation of worldly goods. It is a singular document, and would seem to imply that, not having given religion any special thought during his prime, towards the close of his life he was solicitous to expiate this remissness and to recommend himself jointly to the spiritual powers above and the ecclesiastical below, with a sort of apology for neglecting both so long. Evidently his mind had been preoccupied with other speculations, and he had had no more leisure for theological subtleties and church ceremonials than he had had for money-getting. Was he a worse or less useful man for either "thing left undone?"

However that may be, during the long illness which preceded his death, — May 2d, 1519, at Cloux in France, whither he had been invited by Francis I., — he devoutly conformed to all the requisitions of the Roman Church and received its sacraments. His will, dated 18th April, 1518, recommends "his soul to the Lord Jesus, the glorious Virgin Mary, to *Monsignore* my lord, the Archangel Michael, and all the blessed Angels, Saints, and Saintesses of Paradise," ordering for its repose three grand masses, "*un diacono e sotto diacono*," in the church of St. Dionisio, Amboise, which are to be repeated in other churches with

thirty low masses, etc. Sixty paupers, to be liberally paid, are to carry as many torches at his obsequies. They are afterwards to be given to the above churches, besides ten pounds of wax candles to be used in the masses, and he enjoins gratuities to the poor patients of a hospital at Amboise. Thus, whatever were his opinions, or want of them, on religion, he took a decorous and orthodox leave of its established ministers on earth, and piously conformed to all the formulæ prescribed to propitiate St. Peter in heaven.

Indeed, he appears to have had at no time any more decided religious than political opinions. Vasari, who felt constrained in his second edition to omit or modify a number of assertions in his first, probably on account of living relatives of the artists, says of Leonardo, that he did not believe in any kind of religion, esteeming philosophy far above Christianity. But Vasari, though right in his external judgment, according to the evidence and requirements of the times, had not the capacity himself to understand or appreciate such a mind as Leonardo's. His was a philosophically tranquil mind, resting upon those profound intuitive beliefs which are born to all superior intelligences, recognizing the divine elements of creation, while indifferent or careless of theological dogmas and ritual details. Leonardo was undoubtedly Epicurean in its best meaning. He attached himself with equal facility to Ludovico or Francis I., his enemy,—serving with the same pleasure the court of Rome, the princes of Europe, or the republic of Florence. What he desired was scope and means to work out his best, be it in science or art.

The life of Leonardo, viewed only in the light of genius and its results as contrasted with the average power and accomplishment of mankind, is an extraordinary success;

but compared with its absolute capacity and brilliant promise, a failure. True, he was the founder and director of the Academy of Art of Milan, and left a profound impression both in art and science. This was, however, rather as an abstract power and a phenomenon of attainments than by many positive monuments of his genius and written evidences of his intellectual power. His self-confidence, solidly based upon science, prompted him to suggest the grandest undertakings. Among these was the project of bodily raising from its foundations the massive Baptistery of Florence and of elevating it upon steps, to give it a more imposing appearance. Although his models and drawings convinced the citizens of its feasibility, they had not the courage to sustain him, because out of his presence the thing seemed impossible. When a mere youth he proposed to make Florence a seaport, connecting it by a canal with the sea. He constantly sought employments of equal magnitude and utility, but the spirit and circumstances of the age were unfavorable to the full development of his scientific powers. However, the hydraulic works which he executed for Lombardy, his system of engineering, researches in physics, and philosophical investigations at large, in the one case so humbly and silently performing their useful offices for generation upon generation of men, not even attracting the attention of the passer-by, though without them he would find the fertile plains they water and preserve from inundation but precarious travelling, and in the other, buried in chaotic manuscripts, or scattered widely over an arid sea of speculation,—each and all still extort the wonder of scholars, and incite foreign governments to send missions to examine and profit by them. But much of his invaluable mind was wasted in comparatively profitless work: the inspection of fortresses and military engineering

for Duke Borgia, unimportant plans, mechanical inventions and models, and in ingenious trifles for the amusement of princes, like that automaton lion for the King of France, which walked, and, opening its breast, disclosed bouquets of lilies; animals of wax, that on being inflated with air would fly; then, to surprise the Pontiff Leo X., and for a folly of his own, he prepared the intestines of sheep thin as possible, and so light and compact that he could enclose them in his hand. Connecting them with a bellows in an adjoining room, when visitors entered he caused them to be filled with wind, enlarging them so much as to drive his company into the corners of the apartment. This spectacle, he said, was emblematic of genius, because, while it could be contained in a small compass, it was capable of filling all space.

In art, also, the lesser truths often diverted him from the nobler. Sometimes, however, the grandeur of his conceptions defeated their execution from the inadequacy of material to realize the idea, or from the excessive expense attending them. In this latter respect failure ensued only from causes independent of himself, unless it may be considered that his hindrance sprung from the very vastness of his projects. The model of the colossal equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, "most beautiful and majestic," for the casting alone, could it have been done in one piece, would have required one hundred thousand pounds of bronze. Experiments in varnishes and methods for refining the oils used in painting consumed much of his time, and not unfrequently he injured his pictures by their premature use. Creative art could not fail to languish while the technical absorbed so much of his attention. In view of his capacity for noble composition, one is forced to sympathize with Leo X., who, having ordered a painting from him, upon



perceiving that he began at once "distilling oils and herbs for the varnish," tartly said "Alas! this man will assuredly do nothing at all, since he is thinking of the end before he has made a beginning."

So little remains of his greatest works in statuary and painting that it would seem as if Time and Fortune were equally jealous of his fame. Each has done its worst to secrete or destroy that which most worthily represented it. The "Cenacolo" quickly became a ruin. His cartoons of "Adam and Eve," "Neptune" and the "Battle of Anghiari," have disappeared. The famous hellish shield of his youth is lost. So, too, have his best models of statuary disappeared down the Curtian gulf of Time. He was never permitted to demonstrate his power as an architect. One of his chief works left to us is the "Adoration of the Magi," in the Uffizi, a varied and powerful composition, particularly valuable as showing his process, but a mere chiaroscuro sketch with a few hints for color. This, a few easel pictures, most of which have suffered from restorations or are unfinished, and his not numerous drawings, are indeed but inadequate representations of Leonardo, the complete artist. Moreover, he has the further disadvantage of having many of the works of his scholars, or of less skilful hands, repetitions or imitations, pass as his genuine productions. To crown his misfortunes, he was unlucky in his patrons. The disasters of the reigns of Francis I. and Ludovico thwarted their projects for art and dissipated their resources. A Borgia was not a congenial friend or appreciative patron. Leo X., becoming prejudiced, neglected him. The citizens and magistrates of Florence alone seemed inclined to estimate his genius at its right worth, but he left them to serve royalty in foreign lands, finally ending his career as "painter" to his Most Christian Majesty, in receipt of



the pittance of seven hundred dollars a year, and even then neglecting art for the prosaic labors of an engineer.

Sad, very sad, is this close of so much æsthetic and scientific promise. Yet circumstances are not all in fault. Somewhat must be attributed to that want of a lofty, concentrated resolution to work out great ends in life which we have before alluded to. Instead of making events, he lay by rudderless, waiting for events to make him, never idle, but never laying fortune under contribution to a dominant will, preferring to coquette with her and with time, or quietly submit to the freaks of both. Two elements of greatness, amid his intellectual riches, were wanting to perfect his manhood: passionate energy and lofty moral guidance. The one would have forced him to largely execute, and the other quickened his soul with elevated aims. But notwithstanding these deficiencies of character, his trials, temptations, and mischances, Leonardo was ever the same generous, urbane man, untainted by vice, courteous and considerate to all. To Salai he left a portion of his modest possessions. The only quarrel recorded of him is by Vasari, the professed eulogist of Michel Angelo, who says "there was constant discord between the two, and the competition caused Michel Angelo to leave Florence." As he brings no charge of unfair conduct against Leonardo, which, were it possible, he would have done to defend his special friend and favorite, it may be inferred that the public sentiment was more partial to the genius and deportment of Leonardo, or that Michel Angelo's behavior put himself so clearly in the wrong that he thought it better to go away entirely rather than longer support a competition daily becoming more to his disadvantage. This is the more probable as it was the period of his impetuous, cynical youth, when his sharp-set speeches provoked much enmity

and enraged those who might consider themselves his rivals. Pilkington, without giving his authority, states that Leonardo, "having accepted the charge" of painting the great Council Hall of Florence, "desired to call in the assistance of Michel Angelo, a distinction which that great artist very ill requited by his conduct to the Nestor of the art. Michel Angelo, though then but a young man, had acquired a reputation, and was not afraid to cope with Leonardo; but jealousy arose between them, and each having his partisans, open war was the consequence."\* The advantage in temper and public opinion was undoubtedly with Leonardo, who must have justly considered that from his age,—he was then about fifty,—reputation, and kindness he was entitled to greater consideration from the younger artist than he received. And unlike him, he had never to reproach himself with unamiable speeches towards other artists. At all events, not one is recorded against him.

Giotto and Leonardo in many respects have much in common. Both were rare examples of the prodigality of nature's best gifts, personal beauty excepted in the former. They were complete, universal men, with a range of intellectual power capable of eminence in any direction. Leonardo's more varied acquirements were in unison with the advanced knowledge of his age. Giotto's influence on art was more profound, inasmuch as he concentrated his genius solely upon it. Each sought its development through similar processes of imagination, reflection, and study of nature. Each was independent of the influence of other artists. Each largely inspired in thought and manner the greatest of the masters of their times: Gaddi, Orgagna, Giotto, and Spinello incited by the one; Correggio,

\* *Dictionary of Painters*, p. 581.

Giorgione, and Raphael, representatives themselves of diverse and powerful schools, gaining strength and knowledge from the profound science of the other ; and each attained to the loftiest excellence and widest fame. But here the parallel ceases. Giotto died in his sixty-first year, without a cloud to shadow his uniform prosperity, and Leonardo in his sixty-seventh, a saddened, frustrated man. Giotto was sustained and appreciated by the spirit of his age ; earnest, religious, thorough ; inciting to action, and gifted with elevated inspiration. It was the inauguration of a great intellectual movement, especially in art, and his was the mind that gave it impetus and direction. Hence progress and prosperity were affiliated with him. Leonardo, on the contrary, arrived at its climax, when its great tide had begun to make backwater and to be agitated by contrary impulses, forcing it into a transition state. Indeed, the decadence, which Michel Angelo lived to see complete, had already begun to darken its waters, though as yet more in the motives that inspired art than in its execution. Vices were uppermost in people and politics. Faith was dying out. Luther near at hand. Savonarola was essaying in vain to stem popular corruption and infidelity, and indirectly to reinfuse spirituality into art. But its heart was now turning to manual dexterities, sensual infoldings, skill in color, design, and sensuous beauty, devoid of lofty meaning and noble aim. Princes were superseding the people as patrons of art. Merchants in the progress of luxury and tyranny were ripening into nobles. Freedom's last struggle, that is such freedom as had created and nurtured the glorious art about to die out, was soon to culminate in the fatal siege of Florence. Leonardo, yielding to the drift of events, forsook democracy for aristocracy. Of the two extremes, demagogue or courtier, a choice being neces-

sary, the latter he must be. Giotto's audience demanded his best because it understood and felt it. Their sympathies in noble art were in common. Not so with Leonardo. His audience were either incapable of extracting his best or were indifferent to it. Diverted in great measure from his highest aspirations, he was misled into fields of inferior action and motive. Under happier auspices he might have done as much for himself and his age as did Giotto for himself and his, closing his eyes upon life a successful as well as great man.

Whenever his mind was left wholly at liberty its choice was towards the true and noble. But unfortunately for him and us its action in this direction became limited and exceptional. May not the respective friends of the two artists have some responsibility in this? Giotto was inspired by Dante and Petrarch; Leonardo was directed by Ludovico il Moro, Cæsar Borgia, and Leo X. — a difference as of darkness from light.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Michel Angelo Buonarroti, 1474–1563. Disfigurement of his Features. Attachment to Vittoria Colonna. His Passions and Affections. Quality of his Character and Genius. Independence and Temper. Julius II. and Clerical Critics. His Revenge. Satire. Magnanimity in regard to Art. Reproves a mean Patron. His youthful Discipline. His Father wishes to exorcise the Artist out of him by virtue of Birch. Fails. Ghirlandajo's Opinion. Lorenzo de' Medici adopts him and pensions his Father. Firmness in overcoming personal Weaknesses. His *Wife* and *Children*. Sculpture his Preference. Analysis of his Artistic Character and chief Works. His Successes and Failures. "The Last Judgment." Tombs of the Medici. His Meaning. Theirs. His chief Glory. Temptations of Money and Fame. Resistance. Strong of Will and Work to the last. His Death. Religious Feeling. Influence upon Art. Daniele da Volterra and Sebastiano del Piombo, his chief Scholars.

MICHEL ANGELO BUONAROTTI was born at the castle of Caprese, near Arezzo, March 6th, 1474. Inferior to Leonardo in personal beauty, courtly accomplishments, and breadth of genius, he excelled him in profundity of imagination and force of character. His figure was spare and bony, but compact and active, while his countenance, overshadowed by a massive brain, at no time attractive, became much less so after the bones of his nose were crushed by a blow from the sculptor Torrigiano, in a youthful fracas; an injury which permanently disfigured him. "A sarcasm of his having stung me to the quick" is the palliation his assailant many years afterwards made to Benvenuto Cellini, an equally rash and hot-headed artist, for his misdeed. Strong will and prodigious intellectual power, blended in amiable repose when not over-excited by mental or moral disdain, marked his features. His æsthetic faculties — he was also

poet and musician — were undisturbed by any bias towards physics, though he was partial to metaphysics. Like Leonardo the intellectual was his predominating temperament. He never married, nor formed — so far as can be known — a sexual relation with any woman. Still he was capable of deep and pure friendship with the sex, though this trait was not developed until his sixty-third year, when he formed that sincere attachment for the illustrious Vittoria Colonna which proved the happiest feature of both their lives. It was of an ideal, sacred nature, tending to strengthen his religious instincts and foster his taste for theological speculations. The tender and dignified character of their relation is feelingly suggested by himself, when he was summoned to her death-bed to bid her farewell for Time. Deeply moved, he reverentially kissed her hand, afterwards observing that he only regretted he had not ventured to salute her on her face or forehead.

Although love is the chief topic of his sonnets, yet he treats it as an abstraction or a spiritual emotion, which of itself is so satisfactory to his nature that he never appears to desire its personality. The following extract from one, given by Dupper, illustrates his pure and cold conception of the passion.

“ Better plea  
Love cannot have, than in loving thee  
Glory to the eternal peace is paid,  
Who such divinity to thee imparts  
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.  
His hope is treacherous only whose love dies  
With beauty, which is varying every hour:  
But in chaste hearts, uninfluenced by the power  
Of outward change there blooms a deathless flower  
That breathes on earth the air of Paradise.”

Condivi, who knew him intimately, writes “ I have often heard Michel Angelo reason and discourse on love, but I



never heard him speak on other than Platonic love. In a long intimacy I have never heard from his mouth a single word that was not perfectly decorous, and had not for its object to extinguish in youth every improper and lawless desire. His own nature is a stranger to depravity.”\*

In his eighty-second year he nursed his faithful servant Urbino, who had been with him twenty-six years, but was then dying, with the devotion of a brother, watching over him day and night, never taking off his clothes to repose, and finally closing his eyes with his own hands. This pious duty done, he writes to Vasari, “My loss is most severe and my grief profound. I ever found him incomparable and faithful, the prop and repose of my old age, and he has passed away, leaving me no other hope but that of rejoining him in Paradise. The greater part of me is departed with him, nor does aught remain behind but a deep sense of bereavement.”

Michel Angelo at heart was of an affectionate disposition, and strongly attached to the few he esteemed, but reckless of offence to those he despised or dissented from. While his moral courage is unquestionable, his physical sensibilities gave him at times the air of timidity. Ordinarily he was patient and forbearing. But nothing excited him quicker than injustice, especially if put upon another; on such occasions his indignation became the more forcible because of his keen moral susceptibility acting upon a delicate, nervous organization. He slept little, ate sparingly and irregularly, suffering constantly from headache and indigestion. To these causes may be attributed much of that moodiness and moroseness in him, for which individuals of saner constitutions made but scanty allowance. He coveted solitude because of his devotion to his studies. The public accused him of pride and oddity. Undoubtedly, congenial

\* Cited by Dupper, p. 129.

society was rare, and the few friends he recognized were either among the most eminent of the time for intellectual attainments, or, like his humble servitor Urbino, endeared to him for their virtues. His governing principle was to employ life in acquiring knowledge and in honorable and virtuous labor for the public weal.

He made no parade of his genius or works. In a letter to a nobleman who had ordered a crucifix he says, "I did my best in silence, in order to accomplish what was not expected from me." Like all of the old masters of deep religious feeling he was scrupulously conscientious in the smallest technical details, sparing himself no labor to secure perfectly *honest* work. In painting he prepared his own grounds and even mixed his own colors, not willing to trust such matters to any assistant. The tools he used in sculpture were also made by his own hands. Art, with men of his deep sense of truth and right, had its code of minor morals, as well as life, and it required of him to overlook nothing that might contribute to its perfection. The serious aspect existence had in his eyes is expressed in a letter to Vasari of April, 1554,—“Man should not be gay when all the world is sad. It is ill-timed to make feasts and rejoicings for one just born, which ought the rather to be deferred to commemorate the virtues of a well-spent life.” Such sombre philosophy was as little calculated to make him popular as his metaphysical view of love and tender conscience towards his profession, which few at any period are over-disposed to appreciate. In all matters, however, he first sought to satisfy his own standard of excellence, whether in morals or art. One of his sonnets declares,

“Ill hath he chosen his part who seeks to please  
The worthless world.”

As he truly states, he neither feared its envy nor desired its praise. But personal independence, hard names, and unpalatable truths rankle in people's temper. This he found out from contemporaries, while posterity, by their frequent misconceptions of his character and depreciatory criticism on his art, have often been very unjust to him. Indeed he is not readily understood, on account of his isolated strength and habits as a man. He lived chiefly within himself and for his own self-development. A strong worker and deep thinker, shunning observation, declining gifts as conferring obligations from which he desired to be always exempt, holding venality in abhorrence, and not concealing his annoyance and disgust at the polite simulations of fashionable society, veracious and disinterested to a degree that was a continual reproach to those around him, preferring the high calling of his profession to its gains, entertaining positive opinions and prejudices, not above jealousy of those with whom he condescended to contend, more of a metaphysician than a poet even in his songs: such a man and artist was uncomfortable on most points to the world as it goes. Yet in poetry he could be graceful, elegant, and almost amatory; in painting also. But the one was as rare as the other. So systematic was he with his resources that he always had means at command, which he generously used for the benefit of others. To humble artists he often gave instruction and friendly aid; to the poor he was uniformly charitable, providing needy maidens with dowries, and liberal and considerate to his immediate dependants and relatives. In every respect the sterling ore of lofty principle was to be found underlying all that was harsh, hasty, or uncongenial in his manners. For himself he chose a modest mode of life, sufficient only for respectability, while he gave to his nephew Leonardo several

thousand crowns at a time, and to Urbino, two thousand as a fund for his maintenance. A large share of his valuable time during eighteen years was devoted to the superintendence of the building of St. Peter's, without other remuneration than vexatious and trammelling intrigues to hinder his progress and prejudice him with the papal court. He even sent back money the Pope wished him to accept for his services, and on other occasions evinced similar noble disinterestedness for the promotion of art and religion. At the siege of Florence his patriotism was sorely tried, but nobly stood the test. He was born a citizen — not a subject. His political sympathies were with the democratic puritans of Savonarola. Lofty and clear-minded in his views of public and private life, he was never in harmony with his age. The Medici would have destroyed him as they finally destroyed the liberties of Florence, had they not feared to beggar art by the loss of his genius; not for its own sake, but that he might complete the monuments of their mean-born pride. Although Michel Angelo was constantly employed by popes and princes, he asserted his own dignity as an intellectual potentate and his moral rights as a man, without compromising his liberty of choice as an artist. Sovereign tyrants were compelled to respect the *individual* in him through the force of a will greater than their own, backed by an independence and disinterestedness that alike defied opposition and extorted respect. The Florentine gonfaloniere, Soderini, in writing to Rome in his favor in the outset of his career, recommended him as “a fine young man, unequalled in his art throughout Italy, or perhaps the world. He will do anything for good words and caresses; indeed he must be treated with affection and favor, in which case he will perform things to astonish all

beholders.”\* But his main strength lay in those talents that once cut off God alone could replace. His patrons assigned him topics and labors, but his works were moulded with his image and superscription, not theirs; and when incomplete the failure was of them, not him.

It must be confessed, however, that Michel Angelo's temper was hot and hasty when touched in his honor or art, or overmuch worried by the caprices of despotism and follies of fooldom. His own hasty spirit he never fully learned to rule. Sometimes unjust, he did and said things neither polite nor politic to those who merited his goodwill and respect, and this doubtless rather from a lack of the quality of appreciation of excellence that was foreign to his own manner than from absolute envy or ill-nature. On one occasion he called the amiable Francesco Francia a dunce to his face in the presence of a large company, at the same time telling his son, a handsome youth, that the living figures made by his father were handsomer than those he paints. When he tired of his festive friend, L'Indaco, whose nonsense as well as the humorous stories of others often amused him until the tears ran down his cheeks from excessive laughter, he bluntly shut his door in his face. For a bore he had no charity or civility. Yet he was placable and amenable to reason, and was wont himself to ascribe whatever was acrid in his disposition to the keen air of his native hills, as he did his love of chisel and mallet to the milk of his foster-mother, the wife of a stone-mason. Cardinal Marsila, afterwards Pope, once reproached him for the inadequate light of St. Peter's. Michel Angelo explained to him his plan for remedying the defect. “You never told that before,” testily replied

\* Gaye, *Carteggio*, vol. ii. p. 83, ann. 1506.



his censor. To which the artist haughtily retorted "I am not, neither will I be obliged to tell your Eminence, or any one else, what I ought or am disposed to do; it is your office to see that money is provided, to take care of the thieves, and to leave the building of St. Peter's to me."

The fiery Julius II. brooked from him a slight that he would have forgiven in no one else. When Michel Angelo met him at Bologna, after his abrupt flight from Rome and hasty renunciation of his service on account of a transitory neglect, having sent word to him that he would not again part with his liberty to any one, the pope, whose rage had terrified Florence because it had given the runaway refuge, in his presence simply vented his bile by saying "So you are there! You ought to have come and sought us out, instead of waiting for us to come and seek you out." A monsignore in attendance, desirous of propitiating him towards the offender, urged that as ignorance had caused his offence, such men knowing nothing beyond their art, his holiness should pardon him. His holiness, exasperated at the silly intervention, turned upon him, exclaiming "You are insulting him, which I have not done; you are the ignoramus, not he. Quit my presence at once." Ever afterwards Julius treated the artist with a consideration seldom vouchsafed to others, though the petulant impatience the pope often displayed during the progress of the paintings in the Sistine Chapel drew upon him at times retorts likely to chafe. That the artist fairly tamed the pontiff is to be inferred from Julius' own language to Sebastiano del Piombo, upon proposing to him to paint an apartment in the Vatican, which he eagerly consented to do, premising that with the aid of Buonarrotti he would perform marvels. "I don't doubt it," responded the pope,



for you have all profited by him. But he is terrible, as you know, and nobody can get on with him." \*

But when in the mood, he could parry unsuitable wishes — from such a source equivalent to commands — with a witty dexterity that was unanswerable. Julius desired to have the draperies and various portions of the figures on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel touched with gold and ultramarine, and more highly finished. This not being approved by the artist, he demurred. "I *must* have it touched in parts with gold," the pope repeated. "Holy father," rejoined Michel Angelo, "the sainted characters depicted above did not wear gold." "The work will look mean," urged his holiness. "The saints were poor men who despised riches," finally replied his opponent, and Julius good-humoredly gave up the point.

When reproached by Paul IV. with the nudity of his figures in his "Last Judgment," which was indeed a flagrant departure from the conventional types of Christian art, he observed "if his holiness would only reform the opinions of mankind the picture would be reformed of itself." But as his holiness was impotent for this, he employed Daniele da Volterra to drape the most exceptionable portions, for which service the wags of Rome rewarded him with the nickname of "Breeches-maker." Who has not read of the half-humorous, half-malicious revenge of the artist upon that grave but graceless ecclesiastic, Biagio di Cesena, master of ceremonies to Paul III., for presuming in his presence to tell the pope that the figures in this composition were more suitable for a brothel than a papal chapel! No sooner was his back turned than Michel Angelo seized his pencil, and with a few masterly touches transformed his diabolical Minos into an unmistakable likeness of the

\* Gaye, vol. ii. p. 489.

critic. Being recognized as soon as seen, the laughter it provoked drove the Grand Master beside himself with rage and indignation. He went to the pope to demand redress. "Where has he placed you," the latter inquired. "Put me! why, in hell!" exclaimed Biagio, profoundly distressed. "Alas, then!" said Paul, "he has put you out of my reach; had it been only in purgatory, I might have delivered you, but in hell there is no redemption; *in Inferno nulla est redemptio*."

The satire of Michel Angelo was promptly keen or terrible, as the occasion demanded. When Soderini, the gonfaloniere of Florence, on seeing for the first time his youthful production of the well-known statue of David, remarked that he thought the nose too short, the artist, seizing a handful of marble dust, climbed up to it, and with his chisel and mallet pretended to alter it, dropping at each stroke some dust from his hand. Descending, he asked his critic how he liked it now. "Better," was the sage reply; "you have given it new life." His wit did not spare churchmen. Some one having told him that Sebastiano del Piombo was painting the figure of a monk in a certain chapel, he said it would ruin it. Being asked why, he added, "The monks have corrupted the entire world; a single one, therefore, is quite enough to spoil a small chapel."

Whatever conclusion criticism may arrive at in regard to the "new manner," as it was called, that Michel Angelo introduced into religious art, no one of his age had a clearer insight than himself into the capacities of art for spiritual significance or loftier ideas of its power and dignity. The vigorous protests which fell from his tongue and pencil, often exaggerated by force of virtuous indignation or the power of a genius not always under perfect control, against

the vices and imbecilities that hedged him about, called forth on many occasions retorts in kind. Hence, in 1549, we find an anonymous writer, quoted by Gaye, in speaking of a *Pietà* designed by Michel Angelo, in a fanatical protest against his style, calling him "that inventor of filthy trash, who adheres to art without devotion. Indeed, all the modern painters and sculptors, following the like Lutheran caprices nowadays, neither paint nor model for consecrated churches anything but figures that distract one's faith and devotion; but I hope that God will one day send his saints to cast down such idolatries."

Our artist sought to avoid that ignorance and mysticism in art whose tendency is to superstition and idolatry, and at the same time to reconcile its functions of religious teaching and worship with that æsthetic freedom which admits strength and beauty in a naturalistic sense; believing no doubt with Savonarola, with whose character and aims he deeply sympathized, that material truths wedded to spiritual sentiments were the noblest aims of the artist. The degree of his success is a question which we shall come to a little later. At present, it is sufficient to lay down his moral and artistic character as the foundation of his art. And yielding to his personal ambition, which was large, all that can be claimed for it as an incentive to his labors, there was beside in him a large admixture of noble disinterestedness. He was perhaps the last of those great masters who made piety paramount to interest in their works, instigated, to use the touching words of Gentile Bellini, in 1496, when he refused all remuneration for his noble pictures done for a benevolent confraternity at Venice, "by affection for the Cross."

Lucrative commissions had no effect in stimulating his exertions. Next to piety and love of art, friendship or

honor were his most cogent incentives. He often declined advantageous offers from motives which then were little current. Not that he esteemed his work lightly, for he refused to deliver his "Leda" to the Duke of Ferrara, because his agent had reported slightly of it, and instead gave it away to a friend. Agnolo Doni, a Florentine amateur, stingy withal but appreciating good pictures, ordered from him the celebrated "Holy Family" now in the Tribune of the Uffizi, at the agreed price of seventy ducats. Desirous of obtaining an abatement when it was done, he haggled for forty. Michel Angelo sent at once for his picture or one hundred ducats. Doni then sent the seventy first understood. The artist refused to receive this sum, and peremptorily required him to return the painting or double the original price, which Doni, afraid to lose it, did at once.

A grand man, moulded not out of common stuff, was this same Michel Angelo. He looms up like a giant; in character as well as art; almost mythic amid the humanities of any period, and doubly so by contrast with the weakness of the latter days of his own times. The backbone of the age was softening, becoming putty, in vicious hands too. Thus a man of uncompromising integrity and self-respect, of adamant purpose, setting aside genius, now seems the more heroic from his isolation. Vasari was right in worshipping him. From boyhood to old age, Michel Angelo uniformly sustained his own dignity and that of art; the latter during his earliest years after a fashion somewhat trying both to spirit and flesh.

His father was a descendant of the ancient Counts of Canossa, and prided himself greatly on his aristocratic origin. His means, however, were but scanty, so that he permitted some of his sons to be trained for commerce, but Michel being superior to his brothers, he sent him to a

grammar school at Florence, preparatory to his entering upon one of the learned professions. Here, instead of attending to his regular studies, he spent his time in drawing, manifesting decidedly the will and ability to become an artist. This irritated his parent, whose prejudices of birth were shocked at what he considered the low tastes of his son. Trying every means in vain to dissuade him from his pencil, he finally prohibited its use. But finding his orders of no effect he next soundly flogged him. There was no wavering now. The resolution of the lad was clinched in him by these injudicious blows, and his father, having exhausted the "*ultima ratio*" of parents as well as kings, had to yield. He assented to his apprenticeship for three years to Domenico Ghirlandajo, to whose studio he had been attracted by his fondness for one of his pupils, Francesco Granacci, who had the while lent him drawings, made him acquainted with works of art, and in every way fostered the bent of his disposition. Here his progress was so rapid as before long to excite the jealousy of Domenico, who afterwards, whenever any juvenile work of his scholar was praised, hinted that his own hand was in it, by observing that it came from his studio. Condivi charges Ghirlandajo with refusing to loan him his sketch books. At all events, his pupil speedily drew from him the high encomium, "He has no further need of me."

On one occasion, seeing a fellow-scholar copying a female portrait from a drawing by Ghirlandajo, he took a pen and drew around the original another contour so superior to it as to excite the admiration of every one at his presumptuous talents. It must have been cleverly done, for when Vasari in 1550, who then had it in his possession, showed it to Michel Angelo, he recalled the circumstance with satisfaction, remarking, as he complacently examined it, "I knew



more of this part of my art when I was a young man than I do now in my old age."

When Lorenzo de' Medici established his school for sculpture in his garden in Florence, he requested Ghirlandajo to permit such of his scholars as desired to draw from the antique to go there. Among those who availed themselves of this privilege were Granacci and Buonarroti. The latter became deeply interested in modelling. By chance seeing the mutilated head of a laughing faun, he thought he would copy it in marble, and in a few days succeeded so well, varying the design according to his own fancy, as to attract the praise of Lorenzo, who jestingly qualified it by observing "You have given to the old faun all his teeth; at his age some are usually wanting." No sooner had he left than the impatient boy—he was only fifteen—broke a tooth from the upper jaw, and drilled a hole in the gum to represent the cavity whence it had been dislodged.

Lorenzo was so amused with his aptness and pleased with his talents that he sent word to his father that he wished to converse with him. The old man, suspecting his object, was loath to go, blaming Granacci for having misled his son into a career so unworthy of his family, and protesting that he would never give his consent for Michel's becoming a stone-mason. Granacci in vain tried to explain to him the difference between a sculptor and a mechanic. Nevertheless, not daring to decline the invitation of the magnificent Lorenzo, he went, and was received with great courtesy, and a proposal to adopt his son into the family. Impressed with a due sense of the honorable position conferred upon Michel, he assented. His son was immediately provided with a room, a seat at the princely table, treated as one of the circle, and presented to all the



distinguished people that frequented the palace. Subsequently, the father perceiving that he was in high esteem with the great, and that Lorenzo to gratify him had given him a "violet-colored mantle," began to "clothe him in a more stately manner than before." Much of his leisure time was spent with Lorenzo himself in examining the gems and medals of his invaluable collection, while his graver studies were prosecuted with characteristic ardor. He spent months in making drawings from the frescoes of Masaccio, which were still the chief school of design. It was in the Carmine church that he had his quarrel with Torrigiano.

Lorenzo extended his kindness to his father, on whom he conferred a pension and an office in the customs; a golden consummation little anticipated by the exasperated parent when he tried through the medium of birch to exorcise the artist out of his boy.

The same firmness which Michel Angelo exercised in resisting and overcoming any external impediments to his artistic career he unflinchingly used towards himself, when necessary to overcome any morbid sensibility of his own temperament. A sickening disgust which he experienced in his first essays at dissection compelled him for a while to give up the idea of learning anatomy from human bodies. But ashamed at being mastered by a physical weakness, he persevered until his rebellious stomach was reduced to entire subjection. To the very last he was a student,—replying to Cardinal Farnese, who found him, then an octogenarian, alone, gazing upon the Coliseum, "I yet go to school that I may learn something." In the ardor of young blood he chose art for his bride, and was constant to her through every phase of life. One day a priest asked him "why he had not married and got chil-

dren to whom he could have left his fine productions?" His answer was, "I have a wife who is too much for me already; one who unceasingly persecutes me. It is my art, and my works are my children." He found it impossible to fully satisfy the only tribunal of criticism to which he really deferred, his own mind. Often from sheer inability to express in material the feeling and form that had definite being in his imagination, he threw aside his work when but just begun. Even in this condition it suggests a latent power more impressive than the finished art of not a few distinguished men.

His predilection was towards sculpture. In the maturity of his fame Condivi heard him say, "I repent not having entirely devoted myself to it." The exigences of patrons forced him into architecture\* and painting, and those of war and patriotism into military engineering; but the last was but a temporary employment. And what would not the world have lost had his infuriated father's blows fallen upon a boy — he was but thirteen when he received that memorable chastisement — of greater susceptibility to pain and shame than of will for art! One trembles for the odds and haps of life, and philosophy may well shake in its shoes at the consideration that in any capricious or prejudiced moment a lick or two of a paternal rod may nip in the bud a future St. Peter's, "Last Judgment," and priceless

\* Upon accepting the post of architect of St. Peter's he wrote "I call God to witness that it is against my wish and by force only that I accept this office." When Julius II. desired him to paint the Sistine Chapel, he earnestly entreated to be excused, referring to Raphael as the most qualified for such an undertaking. He seems to have had to a certain extent both a distaste and doubt as to his success compared with Raphael in this department, and on account of his want of experience in fresco work he first called in assistants, but as they did not suit him he ultimately took upon himself the entire manual as well as artistic work, allowing no witnesses, with a success that fully justifies his final self-reliance.

art or science of all kinds. Thanks, O Michel, for your boyish disobedience! Generations yet unborn will add to this, Amen! despite the Sinai commandment of Promise, which seems to have been set aside for this rebellious son, as his days were very "long in the land."

More happy than Leonardo in being wholly and entirely an "artist," his great powers were always available to the ends of art, while his life — let us forget occasional jets of temper or jealousy — was a noble exemplification of its loftiest spirit. More happy also than his rival, he left ample material in each of Art's three great departments to perpetuate his fame and to afford a basis for critical inquiry. Easel pictures by him are almost unknown. That of the Tribune, and a few others that pass as his, embody his peculiarities of coloring and design, but with less to recommend them in point of sentiment than anything else from his hand. The Doni "Holy Family" is particularly objectionable as a sacred composition. The Virgin, in an ungraceful position is making great muscular effort to hold the child on her shoulders, while the background is filled with groups of naked athletes. His landscape is a barren line of horizon. Indeed, for the lesser forms of nature he has no predilection whatever. He seems to ignore the landscape entirely. Neither was portraiture more to his taste, because he hated to take anything from life unless it offered the perfection of beauty. One portrait only is recorded of him, a cartoon of life-size of a Roman, Messer Tomasso de' Cavalieri. Yet beauty was certainly not one of his successes. Nevertheless his types of character are wholly ideal; creations of his own fecund imagination, put into those grand forms which were his special aim. As Titian touched canvas with a broad, earnest, eloquent sweep of the brush, doing at once exactly what he wished to do, neither more nor less,

though a hair's breadth either way, or greater or less thickness of color than he dashed on, would have marred his meaning, so Michel Angelo smote marble with a corresponding exactitude and greatness of result. Like Raphael in his "Ezekiel," he could also be sublime in a small compass, as we see in his models preserved in his house at Florence. Always free in invention, like Leonardo, he borrows from no one, but creates or combines after a manner purely his own, giving even to the most art-worn topics new force and character. In his designs of the "Annunciation" the Virgin starts with mingled fear and awe at the apparition of the angel. She is grand in conception; the angel heavy and weak, of the earth, earthy. He *sinks* in the air, because too material to float. In another drawing of the same event the angel poses after the manner of a ballarino. Curious enough in their way are the original drawings, still preserved in Casa Buonarrotti, of individual figures in the "Last Judgment." In them the nude Christ appears even more like an enraged Jupiter than in the fresco, while the Madonna, entirely naked, is sketched as if in the attitude of some extravagant theatrical action. The whole presents a curious confusion of nudity and frantic gesticulation.

But whatever may be his peculiarities, Michel Angelo stands by himself, a great, original, creative mind, idiosyncratic in thought and style, difficult to comprehend on account of his depth and intensity, while those who look chiefly for grace and beauty joined to tender sentiment he almost repels, from his delight in mere mastery over form. His muscular *tours de force* and violent action and—as in the "Last Judgment," in which he omits nothing that painting can render of difficult human anatomy in attitude, with a force of projection, precision, and foreshortening that is

wonderful in itself—indifference to the language of color, serve to show how completely the sculptor had acquired the control of the painter. He too frequently sacrifices the nobler features of art to the development of the utmost variety and strength of gymnastic exercise and exaggerated muscular organization, so that even his saints—at least some of them—have the look of gladiators or Titans, to the detriment, especially in the females, of their more graceful points, the more disagreeable that he so often shows a wanton contempt for proprieties of posture. In his eagerness for this peculiar power he offends at the first glance. But when we get beneath the superficial aspect and penetrate his creative thought, we there find that that was as Titanesque as his forms. All the elements of a great painter, even that which he usually neglects, color, are visible in his Biblical creations that look down from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel with a significant sublimity never excelled. Here he shows himself the great poet. Not, as in the “Last Judgment,” simply varying preceding inventions with an injudicious mingling of pagan and Christian imagery, but with supernatural strength, embodying the meaning of the Eternal Word in lofty and spiritual shapes. Borrowing nothing in composition from previous art, he incarnates his imagination into pictorial life, light, eloquence, and beauty, with a purity and freshness of idea and expression that stamp this production as uniquely masterly. Its broad unity is as perfect as its solemn repose; and its adaptation to its locality such as only could have been effected by one equally great as architect, sculptor, and painter. As a whole, it is the noblest monument of Michel Angelo’s mind, combining the most varied and profound motives with adequate material expression, in which not only are the technical difficulties of position and art won-



derfully overcome, but it also presents a tenderness of feeling, and delicate appreciation of woman's most winning traits and domestic nature, and a general grace, not usually characteristic of him; and at the same time, the dignity, majesty, and intensity, more exclusively his, harmonize admirably with these qualities. Not only is it the highest effort of Michel Angelo's mind, but if it be viewed as a composition blending in one great whole the supernal elements of Christian faith and historic truth, poetry, tradition, and revelation, in their fullest and deepest significance, vitalized by an inspired imagery suggestive of man's creation, fall, and redemption, and symbolizing in grand and solemn forms the whole compass of religion, it embodies the highest excellence that strictly Christian art has ever attained: a fitting roof to its glorious temple.

As perfect in its way, so far as can be judged now, though not surpassing Leonardo's rival cartoon, was that of his, previously spoken of: a scene in the Pisan campaign. A fragment of a sketch, which alone has reached our times, depicts a party of soldiery, bathing in the Arno, surprised by the call to battle. Such a motive was admirably adapted for the display of his favorite powers of design. Accordingly we find that his contemporaries, who had already begun to merge the quality of thought in the facility of execution, esteemed this as his best work. No doubt, so far as its perfection corresponded to the idea, a vigorous and graphic display of martial forms under emotions of mingled alarms, courage, surprise, confusion, and impatience for the combat, drawn and grouped with amazing skill and naturalness of action and feeling, this cartoon deserved what was said of it. Like Leonardo's, it formed an epoch in this style of painting, and while it remained was frequented as a school by artists of all classes. Had



Michel Angelo been as successful in his conception of the "Last Judgment" as he was of the coming mortal strife, he would have excelled every other artist in the highest daring of art. But the triumph of the saved and the despair of the damned, the joys of heaven and the horrors of hell, the divine Judge, once the victim of fallen man, now the avenging God ; the majesty of his angels and the exceeding glory of the Throne ; the effete earth, its expired civilization, gaping graves, and wild drift of human souls rising in continuous vast clouds therefrom, black or white as despair or hope has colored them ; above, the rainbow hues, sparkling gems, and golden gates that tell of Paradise, its sealed multitudes in their bright garments of redemption, whose flood of light even reaches the earth and makes pale the lurid glow that ascends from the quenchless flames of the bottomless pit and quivers on the agonized looks of those whose eternal day and night it is about to be ; gloating, impatient Satan counting his prey, and his loathsome crew anticipating their spoils ; mortality finished and immortality begun ; mountains falling, oceans drying up, sin-laden nature disappearing forever in the abyss of Eternity ; a scene in which every human being has a soul at stake ; a spectacle sublimely appalling in its faintest conception,—all this proved too much for Michel Angelo, as it has for every artist. Can we wonder !

Although his powerful patrons continually forced upon him the greatest undertakings, circumstances over which he had no control, death, poverty, or inconstancy of those who supplied the means, and even base intrigue, sometimes hindered his conceptions and prevented their entire execution. The frescoes of the Sistine he controlled to their completion. But his noble plan of St. Peter's was bastardized to its present comparatively ineffective appearance ;

the mausoleum of Julius II. was barely begun, when a new pope forced its relinquishment for designs of his own ; and the monuments of the chapel of the Medici at Florence were never completed, owing to pressure of work at Rome. The best years of his life were wasted in quarrying marble by order of Leo X., that miscalled patron of art. Much, therefore, of his production but hints, as it were, his full power. Nothing is more thoroughly characteristic of him than those noble statues, unlike to classical art as like to aught in modern, peerless in their significant sublimity, perfect in their seeming incompleteness, giants of another sphere that forever guard the tombs of that ever to be abhorred race of liberty-slayers, symbolizing the Night and Dawn of another Italy ; prophetic marbles whose lessons will yet be household words among her citizens, over which broods, in stern, remorseful melancholy, the dissolute Lorenzo, a fitting representative of Tuscany's Scourge.

That he intended to convey political thought to his enslaved countrymen, ingenious, bold, and precious, is evident from his poetical reply to Giovanni Strozzi, who placed the following lines upon the statue of "Night."

"Night, whom you see in soft repose,  
An angel sculptured, yet life glows  
Where sleep exists : speak then, for she,  
Spite of the doubts, will answer thee."

To which Night rejoins, through the sculptor's muse,

"While power unjust and guilt prevail,  
Stone would I be, and sleep I hail :  
To see or feel would each be woe ;  
Oh ! wake me not, and whisper low." \*

Bold words and true ! The Medici wisely overlooked

\* English version from Harford's *Life of M. A. Buonarroti*, vol. ii. p. 31. London, 1857.

them, not from any lack of appetite to stifle the remotest protest to their basely gotten power, but because there was but one Michel Angelo. The sleep of centuries lingers over Italy.\* But she is awakening like a young giant refreshed to run his course.

In his attachment to liberty, religious aspirations, and uncompromising independence, Michel Angelo rises superior to Leonardo. Great principles underlie his character. Even his defects of temper and art were allied to greatness of mind, though in regard to Raphael, as we shall see by and by, in one instance at least we must note an exception. Impatience of littleness and dishonesty, an eager, unfaltering struggle towards what, though fore-reached in his imaginations, was unattainable in material, were the causes of his more obvious weaknesses, or more properly speaking, exaggerations, in either. Both Leonardo and Michel Angelo were thorough incarnations of the Etruscan æsthetic faculties. The former predominating through abstract intellect, basing his art on facts and science; the completest example of naturalism the world has ever produced. The latter was even more deeply rooted in the Tuscan element, individualistic in the highest and loftiest degree, having

\* Written before her sons under Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel had established their claim to freedom. There is no brighter leaf in the history of any country than, not alone the heroic deeds of the past and present year, but the stern self-denial, uncompromising patriotic sacrifice, and patient abiding of their time, which have characterized the workers out of the problem of Italian unity and liberty. Nobler material for a great people nowhere exists than among Italy's men and women. A nation is now being born of them, to whose future their past in art, science, literature, and power will be but as infancy compared with manhood. God bless Italy! Away with those who would, like the Austrian leech or the Papal vampire, suck out her life's blood! Unto them let there be that *red* baptism and scourging of recoiling misdeeds which reforms or breaks the self-hardened hearts of evil-anointed rulers, be they the spawn of crowns or votes. We speak as we feel, after long witnessing the ruthless tyranny and dirty state-craft of Austria in Italy, and the utter eclipse of a people's noblest energies and aspirations by papal misrule.

no real sympathy with Grecian sentiment in art, though admiring its technical details, profound, ambitious, rarely historic, less seldom sensuous or mythological, but when indulging in the latter, able to render its true spirit apart from sensualism, noble and dignified, and in the worthiest sense a Christian artist, interpenetrated with the spirit of the Word made flesh. And this is his highest glory; overlooked too much in the vigor of his stroke and the grandeur of his forms; but the more eminent and noteworthy, inasmuch as his religion was tempered by a philosophy which cleansed it of egotism and fanaticism. He was the climax of that religious Epic art which, born with Giotto, we have traced through so long a line of distinguished artists. And before leaving him, in thus summing up his genius, we must not omit to record the flattering testimonials paid to it by sovereign powers, coupled with pressing temptations to serve them. Bajazet II. solicited him to come to Constantinople, and even sent him an unconditional letter of credit for his expenses, with inducements sufficient to fire the ambition or self-interest of any one but Michel Angelo. Francis I. tempted him by much flattery and many golden arguments to take up his residence at his court. The Venetian republic offered him an annual pension of six hundred crowns to come to Venice, with discretionary power to employ himself as he liked, and to be paid accordingly, without reference to his salary. He declined all. No temptation could swerve him from his independence and integrity. For to have broken any agreement, real or implied, even in spirit, for a mercenary or ambitious motive, would have forever dishonored him with himself.

Notwithstanding many trying bodily infirmities, Michel Angelo's mind remained clear and vigorous to his end.

At eighty-seven he produced a beautiful and highly finished model of the cupola of St. Peter's, partly made with his own hands. Cherishing no ill-will for the paternal floggings, he now writes that he should esteem it a privilege for "my infirm bones to repose beside those of my father." His matured views of religion, in common with those of Vittoria Colonna, were what is understood among Protestants as "evangelical," though in conformity to the Roman ritual. In his last moments, 17th February, 1563, he desired to be reminded of the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

"Eternal Lord, from the world unloos'd,  
Wearied to Thee I turn.

\* \* \* \* \*

View not my sins in the condemning light  
Of justice strict; avert Thine awful ear,  
Nor stretch forth on me Thine avenging arm."

This is the language of one of his sonnets. An almost ascetic melancholy occupied his mind in his later years. Nor is it, in view of the condition of society and politics and his naturally grave temperament, a matter of much surprise that his feelings should have turned to the sombre side of life and piety. He had not that lively, ecstatic faith of the early purists, which made them overlook the gloom of earth in the anticipatory peace and joy of eternal life.

Reviewing his own life and artistic ambition towards their close in the following sonnet, turned into English by Mr. Glassford, he thus feelingly speaks.

"Now my fair bark through life's tempestuous flood  
Is steered, and full in view the port is seen,  
Where all must answer what their course has been,  
And every work be tried, if bad or good.  
Now do those lofty dreams, my fancy's brood,  
Which made of ART an idol and a queen,



Melt into air ; and now I feel, how keen !  
 That what I needed most I most withstood.  
 Ye fabled joys, ye tales of empty love,  
 What are ye now, if twofold death be nigh ?  
 The first is certain, and the last I dread.  
 Ah ! what does Sculpture, what does Painting prove,  
 When we have seen the Cross and fixed our eye  
 On him whose arms of love were there outspread !”

A few days before his departure, he disposed of himself and his effects in the following laconic and characteristic manner. “I commend my soul to God, my body to the earth, and my property to my nearest of kin.” A month later, his corpse continued to be so well preserved as almost to persuade those who saw it that he lay in a “sweet and quiet sleep.” Even in the last century, on his tomb being opened in Sta. Croce, at Florence, where he had been interred with honors and a mourning rarely given to any one, the corpse was found to be still in good preservation.

His soul still lives amongst us in his good works. So emphatic a character, all granite, could not fail to deeply affect the art of his age. Leonardo’s force was dissipated through many channels, while Michel Angelo’s centred into one deep, uniform current, sweeping along with it many able minds. The chief of his followers was Ricciarelli, or Daniele di Volterra, who died in 1566, and Fra Sebastiano del Piombo (1485–1547), of Venice, who to Michel Angelo’s force of design united that strength and harmony of coloring which he neglected. But with these and a few other partial exceptions, the school that sprung from him quite justified his prediction “that his style would be productive of inept artists.”\* Nothing short of his calibre of soul could inspire the forms that he created with life and poetry. Inferior men saw in them only grandeur of design and cleverness of hand. Imitating these only, ambi-

\* Lanzi, vol. i. p. 176.



tious of statuesque expression, neglectful of the principles of color and composition, without invention or sentiment, the weak artists that "worshipped Michel Angelo as their great master, prince, and god of design,"\* produced but little that was respectable and much that was contemptible, and their works, still crowding churches and palaces throughout Italy, deserve no other mention than that of utter condemnation.

\* Claudio Tolomei. See Lanzi, vol. i. p. 176.

## CHAPTER XV.

The Power of a Name over Feeling. Whose Name in Art most pleasantly excites Feeling. Raffaello Santi, or Raphael, 1483-1520. His Birth, Infancy, Boyhood, Education, Orphanage. Becomes a Pupil of Perugino. Goes to Florence. New Friends and Associations. The Charm of his Character. Whence and What. Rivalry with Buonarrotti at Rome. Intrigue against him. Court of Leo X. Aretino and Vittoria Colonna, the Extremes of the Character of the Times. Raphael's Amiability. Adaptability to Place and Circumstance. Susceptibility and Sensibility. Connection with the Fornarina. Escapes being a Cardinal and Benedict. Cause of his Death. His Universalism. Breadth of Temperament. Analysis of his Purism, Naturalism, and Classicalism. His Relations to Painting in general. Chief Merits and the Reverse. Why Raphael is the greatest of Painters.

How much of pain or pleasure may be embodied in a name! Among the living are there not always some whose mention stirs up recollections that we would gladly bury in oblivion, or emotions that thrill us as with delicious strains of music? Memory may slumber. But one familiar word suffices to reawaken it to active existence, causing us to weep or rejoice according to the string it touches. So it is with those whom we have not seen on earth, but whose spirit lingers in our midst to instruct or delight the successors to their toils and temptations: and not only to these, but to the hopes, joys, sympathies, and knowledge which brightened their earthly existence. The world is better for their sojourn. Our loads are lightened, pleasures augmented, and spirits refreshed by the tokens of their hearts and minds: a magnetic flow of humanity from the Past to the Present, in turn to be trans-

mitted by us as the sacred legacy of genius to the Future.

In the review of art to this point, have we not met many artists whose divine flow has quickened our higher natures and exalted our faculties to a more interior sense and an acuter appreciation of spiritual and intellectual life? To all such our hearts gravitate with grateful acknowledgment. We owe them a vast debt. For their art has expanded us as men, and strengthened our consciousness of immortality. Theirs is an eloquence that makes our spirits burn within us. No fear, as with the living, of injudicious appeal or verbal misunderstanding. We are freed from envy, jealousy, self-interest, or deceit, in all that relates to them. They have coined their souls into tangible shapes, photographing, as it were, their faith, feelings, and knowledge — life and immortality as understood by them — for our well-being, purged of irritation and accident, with nought between us and them to disturb except such disfigurements and veiling as jealous time visits upon all material. Welcome, unseen friends! Strangers they are not, for we read their characters and know that only a thin crust of matter divides their spirits from ours. May God multiply upon them *there* the happiness they confer *here*!

Who of all the children of past time is most akin to our sympathies in all things? Answers will vary according to differences of mind and temperament. But we believe the popular suffrage would fall upon Raffaello \* d' Urbino, or, as he is more commonly known out of Italy, Raphael; as happy in his name, given as an augury of good when he first saw light, as fortunate in life, in which respect he alone of the Etruscan sons of art equals Giotto. Then,

\* This is the modern Italian orthography. The artist himself spelt it differently, Rafaele or Raphaello.

too, although establishing his capacity for sculpture and architecture, and even making notes on art, as if prompted by an unfledged idea of authorship, he was emphatically the PAINTER; for he devoted himself to painting with unsurpassed industry and success.

Raphael was born in the picturesque city of Urbino, on the 28th of March, 1483. His father, Giovanni Santi, whose career as painter and poet has been noticed, possessed a cultivated mind, refined manners, and gentle disposition; which traits, with large increase, were transmitted to his son. Nothing is known of his mother, who died when he was eight years old, except that her sensible husband, contrary to the general custom, required her to nurse their child herself and to train his tender years at home. There can be no doubt that their relation was a tender and loving one. For this, proof enough exists in the pure sentiment and infantile joy of his "Holy Families," which invariably bear exquisite traces of his refined and affectionate conception of the natural tie between a mother and son. Tradition puts him as a boy-angel in one of his father's pictures.\* It is easy to believe that that sweet countenance, with the long, wavy, golden-hued hair flowing over the shoulders, was modelled from his son. As he grew, his locks became of a rich chestnut tint, eyes dark hazel, and his features assumed a soft melancholy, not sad but spiritual, most engaging to look upon. Without being strikingly beautiful, he was early said to have the look "of an angel;" which comparison, after he passed from the religious atmosphere of Umbria into the classical shades of Rome, was changed into "the favorite of Apollo." So precocious was his talent for art that he assisted his father in painting almost as soon as he entered his studio. Be-

\* Fig., vol. iii. p. 132, *Storia della Pittura Italiana*, Rosini.

fore Giovanni died he had provided him with a step-mother, whose love he won and returned. Upon parting with her, at the desire of his uncle, to enter the studio of Perugino, he shed "many tears." Afterwards, in 1499, upon learning that dissensions had arisen under the widow's roof, growing out of the division of the scanty funds left his family by his father, the youthful Raphael hastened home and conciliated the parties, devoting his first earnings for two years to the support of his mother-in-law and his sister.

In Perugia, as everywhere else, he made numerous friends. Docile, teachable, susceptible, in the unsullied purity of a piously trained infancy, surrounded by the works of the Purists, and attracted to their study by the example of his master, Raphael made rapid progress in art in the direction of the religious school. Before he was sixteen he had studied Perugino's designs and style with so much spirit, that his copies of his paintings were frequently mistaken for the originals. Few of these works have been discovered, if preserved, though, as he remained with him four years, with his facility of labor, he must have executed many. It is not difficult now to detect in those to be seen, the greater hardness of manner and the timidity of youthful design of the pupil, with more refinement of feeling and variations in motive and execution, such as an independent mind of greater innate delicacy of sentiment, beginning to be aware of its power, would instinctively make. If possible, he throws into the eyes of his personages even more earnestness and a loftier ecstatic vision than did Perugino into his, at the same time gradually developing that peculiar grace of movement and idealism of character which he subsequently carried to such perfection.\*

\* For example of one of these early paintings after Perugino, see Appendix,



The inspirations of Umbrian art and life were not sufficient to satisfy his impressible, varied mind, and in 1504 he was attracted to Florence. This step was much better for his regular and thorough progress than if he had gone directly to Rome. By it he became familiar with the best examples of living, naturalistic art, before being brought under the fascinations of the classical. He spent several years in that city, devoting himself with "indescribable energy and application" to his studies. We have already alluded to the friendship he formed with Fra Bartolomeo and its mutual benefits. Beside the frescoes of Masaccio, which he carefully studied, the noble and accurate design of Leonardo impressed him strongly, and led him out of the restricted precision of the Umbrian school into a broader and more comprehensive view of art. Nothing escaped his quick, tenacious observation. He reaped from every source that was open to him a rich harvest of ideas and knowledge. So, too, later, when at Rome, availing himself of every opportunity, he acquired the experience and feeling of classical art; mingling and transfusing all these varied acquisitions by the alchemy of his own graceful power into styles of his own, which, although confessing his indebtedness to other minds, maintained his own individuality and returned all his borrowings to the world, with large interest, in coin of his own impress.

Raphael's amiability led him occasionally to sacrifice his own pure taste and the strict rules of composition to the unartistic desires of friends and patrons. The "Madonna del Sisto," "Expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple," and the "Transfiguration" are examples of the introduc-

under head of Raphael in the "Descriptive Catalogue;" and pl. K, fig. 33, for the composition only. This plate, and those of Perugino, fig. 32, and Lo Spagna, fig. 34, are useful in the above respect only. In every other particular they fail in giving a just idea of the paintings.



tion of forced accessories to the injury of their unity and meaning. Vasari, who had the Michel Angelo fondness for nudity, says of one of his early paintings, commissioned by some nuns of Padua, "the infant Christ is in the lap of the Virgin, and is fully clothed, as it pleased those simple and pious ladies that he should be." But exceptions of this character are not common. His powers of persuasion were irresistible. Not from the force of logic or eloquence, as with Leonardo, but from the magnetism of a lovable disposition. Listen to the often-quoted words of his naïve chronicler. They steal over one like enchantment. "The power was accorded to him by Heaven of bringing all who approached his presence into harmony; an effect inconceivably surprising in our calling, and contrary to the nature of our artists." (O rare Vasari!) "Yet all, I do not say of the inferior grades only, but even those who lay claim to be great personages—and of this humor our art produces immense numbers"—(Well said again, honest Vasari!)—"became as of one mind, once they began to labor in the society of Raphael, continuing in such unity and concord that all harsh feelings and evil dispositions became subdued, and disappeared in his presence; every vile and base thought vanishing before his influence. At no other time has such harmony prevailed. But this was caused by his surpassing all others in courtesy as well as art. Every one confessed the persuasion of his sweet and graceful disposition, which was so replete with goodness and so perfect in charity that not only men honored him but the very animals caressed and followed him."

It is not surprising that this atmosphere of harmony—a free gift of Heaven—should have permeated his art! Stranger or friend, it mattered not, with all his occupa-

tions, he found time to respond to the calls of either for assistance, giving away his designs, instructing verbally, and often leaving his own to aid another's work. He kept a host of artists in constant employment, teaching and benefiting them, rather as a loving parent than as a master. At Rome, if he went to court, he was followed by a cortège of fifty or more painters, — men of rare excellence among them, — who, after this public manner, delighted to honor him. His pupils were as zealous for his honor as the most loyal retainers of a mediæval baron. When Rosso sought to deprecate his works, they fell upon him with murderous blows, from which he was but too happy to escape on any terms. To have been thus beloved by ambitious and older minds of every grade, professional rivals as some might esteem themselves, bespeaks a genius of affection as divine as that which interpenetrated his painting. "In short, he did not live the life of a painter, but that of a prince." Julius II. and Leo X. treated him on the footing of friendly equality; in reality acknowledging there was more divinity in his credentials than in theirs. Overlooking the jealousy of Michel Angelo, who declared that "whatever Raphael knew in his art he knew from me," Raphael thanks God that he was born in the age of Buonarotti. If he were at any time indignant at the invidious comparisons made between his designs and those of that artist by the partisans of the latter, it never provoked him to ungenerous retaliation or unjust remarks. Perhaps, we should except his sharp repartee to his irritable rival, who, contemning his love or rather his permission of public display, called out one day to him as he passed by his house attended by his usual brilliant retinue of friends and pupils, "You march with a grand train, like a general." "And you," retorted Raphael, "go alone, like a hangman" — the sole ungracious speech

of his on record. Considering the invidious bitterness with which their disciples discussed their respective merits, and the nature of their contest for artistic supremacy, it betokens much mutual respect and self-control that between them nothing worse came of it. At one period Michel Angelo believed that Raphael had caballed with his uncle Bramante to injure him in the estimation of Julius II. But it did not prevent him, as was mentioned in the notice of the former, from recommending Raphael as the better adapted to carry out the designs of the pope for the Sistine Chapel.

In each of these great artists there was a definite, specific superiority to the other. Raphael's bias was as marked towards painting as his rival's towards sculpture. Grace predominated in the one, grandeur in the other. Neither equals his rival when competing for his specific excellence, though in comparison with other artists attaining a positive superiority in his aim. Raphael no doubt did study and profit by the works of Michel Angelo, and in his prophets and sibyls aspired to a direct competition with him in his particular greatness, while on the other hand Buonarrotti's pride would not permit him to confess he had anything to gain by a similar course with Raphael's paintings. Yet in the heat of the competition between them for the suffrages of Rome, conscious of his own feebleness in color, particularly in oils, which method he had sneered at as a woman's art, fit only for the indolent and dawdling, and stung by the unfavorable comparisons publicly made in this respect between them, he plotted with Sebastiano del Piombo to secretly furnish him with designs, to which Sebastiano should give the magic richness and warmth of his Venetian coloring, passing the paintings off as entirely his own. It was a subtle plot, so unworthy of Michel Angelo's charac-

ter that did not the partial Vasari narrate it,\* one would not be disposed to give it credit. His object was, by combining his, as he conceived, superiority of design with the Venetian superiority of color, to raise up an artist, even at his own expense in public opinion, that should beyond contradiction rank above Raphael, and thus lessen the extraordinary esteem in which he was held. In fact, to humble him, he was willing to crown a sovereign over both. Moreover, he intrigued, "*sotto ombra di terzo*," under the shade of a third party, to be made umpire to decide between Raphael and Sebastiano in the rivalry he had concocted, and so guide public opinion in the coveted direction. But in his impatience to exalt his coadjutor, he did not sufficiently conceal his own hand in the work. The secret leaked out, though not until his weighty authority had brought many to attest the victory of his friend and greatly to exalt his reputation. The whole affair seems an extraordinary weakness in Buonarrotti; for his antagonist could not have failed to recognize his design, particularly in the "Christ at the Column," done for San Pietro in Montorio. When the conspiracy got bruited abroad, the politic and amiable Raphael quietly observed, "I rejoice at the favor Michel Angelo does me, since he proves that he thinks me worthy to compete with himself and not with Sebastiano."†

The beautiful character that in his youth endeared Raphael to every one he never lost. No ill-tempered or uncourteous act escaped him. He always manifested the same uniform suavity, perfect grace of manner, and sincerity of heart; ever genial, lovable, and generous; in truth, to use the words of the Litany, delivered from

\* *Vita di Sebastiano*, p. 362.

† Mengs, cited by Quatremere de Quincy, Bohn, p. 399.

“pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness:” such was his innate, every-day Christianity; a Christianity born of the spirit, untinctured by dogmas or metaphysical speculations, into the mazes of which he was indisposed to enter. For his pliable nature accommodated itself without doubt or questionings to the ritual in which it had been nurtured. What marvel that unutterable sorrow pervaded the Eternal City at his premature death. A genius like his was indeed rare to earth. Count Castiglione exclaimed, “I cannot believe myself in Rome, now that my poor Raphael is no longer here.” He was mistaken. Raphael lives ever in Rome; as much as Paul or Cæsar.

In doing justice to his attractive qualities, caution should be exercised not to unduly elevate him above his actual virtue. His goodness and amiability, like his feeling for grace and beauty, were instinctive. Nature had endowed him with a beautiful organization of spirit and body. In him there was no labored tact or severely trained courtesy. His qualities gushed freely and melodiously, like the waters of a fountain, making all life around them delectably green and flowery. They cannot therefore be counted to his moral credit in the same degree as if they had been the result of the victory of religious principle over a rebellious nature. Michel Angelo had much controversy with his temper. His idiosyncrasies were the reverse of those of Raphael. Hence there was a severer virtue in his manifest infirmities, checked as no doubt they were by a rigid sense of duty and a conscientious regard for religious truth, than in the more agreeable deportment of his competitor, who floated gayly and prosperously on the current of events without other guide than his refined and lovable instincts. Then, too, he had had the advantage of being



early trained by pious and cultivated parents, who, comprehending from the first the rare faculties and goodness of their son, developed them in their most hopeful direction. His ambition was always unselfish. In him it was a generous love of distinction based upon his own deserts, overflowing with tenderness to his kin, esteeming his uncle "dear as a father," and writing to him in the height of his prosperity, with almost childish simplicity and delight, "I am doing honor to you, to all our relations, and to our country."

The loving remembrance with which he ever regarded Perugino, who so soon after their meeting had generously prognosticated that his pupil would shortly become his teacher, the graceful acknowledgment he made him by causing his frescoes in the Vatican to be preserved when doomed to destruction, and the introduction of Perugino's portrait into his compositions, are characteristic of Raphael's tenacious gratitude to all who had shown him kindness. Perhaps no quality in him is more conspicuous than his facility of adapting himself to every social condition without detriment to his better nature, of adding to his own stock of ideas from every source of knowledge open to him, culling from it as the bee does pollen from flowers, and reproducing it in new and richer shape. Hence he was always varying and progressing, while his correct taste and pure sentiment kept him from wandering far at any time from the right direction, though adapting himself with ingenuous ease to the varied circumstances of his situations.

While in Umbria, he was a purist because of its religious influences brought to bear upon the congenial traits of his own mind, which expanded towards them instinctively and gracefully. Had his genius been con-



finer to this locality, the world would have known him only as a master who perfected the style of Perugino, adding to it the purity and variety which it wanted. Florentine teachings transformed him from the sweet and pensive spiritualist into the dramatic artist, enlarging his sphere of observation and directing him more particularly towards nature as a field of study, promoting a taste for portraiture and historical painting, though without destroying his previous inspirations. Transferred from factious, enterprising Florence to corrupt Rome—it was the golden age of Leo X., when vice and infidelity were fast ripening it for pillage and slaughter at the hands of the heretical north—with its revived classicalism and pagan predilections, Christianity existing only as a gorgeous, hybrid tyranny and aping Peter with the bowels of Anthony, venality, sensuality, and hypocrisy everywhere rife; at a period when Pietro Aretino\* was spewing his libellous ribaldry, filth, and nauseous flattery to the edification of rulers and mingled terror and amusement of the clergy, levying black-mail on all sides, a nasty, obscene mind, but fragrant to this age,—a mind fittingly satirized by Leonardo in a retaliatory drawing† for

\* “At this epoch,” so says Ranké, *History of the Popes*, chap. 2, sec. 3, “it was considered the mark of high breeding in Rome to call the principles of Christianity in question, and hardly a priest came back from saying mass without uttering outrageous words in denial of its reality.” Speaking of Cardinal Petrucci and a virtuous young lady he was striving to debauch, Mariotti, in his *Italy*, vol. ii. page 148, remarks of the reign of Leo X., “So arduous was it then for unprotected virtue to find shelter against enterprising libertinism that, unable otherwise to protect herself from the prelate’s importunities, she destroyed herself by poison.” The most obscene and blasphemous jest-book of any epoch, the *Facetie* of Bracciolini, was the work of a priest, the confidential secretary of contemporary popes, whose children were publicly acknowledged.

† In the possession of Professor Tossoni, Florence. Aretino was born in 1492. He was a favorite of Gritti, Doge of Venice in 1527. Charles V. admitted him to his closest intimacy, gave him a gold necklace, offered to make him a knight, and bestowed upon him a pension. Francis I. sent him costly presents; as also did Henry VIII. of England. He was knighted by

a gratuitous infamy put upon him by Aretino, out of certain members of the human body so as to give the poet's likeness without obtrusive indecency, but which on closer inspection discloses in symbolical shapes the satyr-like character of Aretino;—in such an atmosphere it should create less surprise that Raphael in a few designs and paintings manifested its proclivities, than that he escaped so thoroughly its degradation. There also existed true religion, learning, and refinement. They found a home in the distinguished circle that at a subsequent period gathered around Vittoria Colonna. Her piety was ever an emphatic protest against the prevalent tone of society. Raphael's temperament drew him nearer to the fashionable class, mere pleasurists and courtiers, among whom, however, there were men of large attainments, by whose stores of knowledge he profited. Becoming himself a courtier of the nobler sort, he lived amidst flattery, seductions, and vice, without other taint than—as times were—a venial attachment to the woman immortalized by his pencil; she, who a century later, came to be popularly known as the “Fornarina,” or baker's daughter. She was of the legitimate Roman type of beauty, dark-tinted, luscious, and richly endowed with substantial charms, brimful of passion, with not much to recommend her features in an intellectual point of view, although from Raphael's constancy and his handsome provision for her in his will, when, at the point of

Pope Julius III., who embraced and kissed him before his court, giving him the more substantial token of his favor in one thousand crowns. His audacity led him to apply for a cardinal's hat, which, though he was called the “divine,” was rather too much for even the papal court to submit to. Aretino made a characteristic end of his scandalous life in 1559, dying in a fit of laughter at hearing of the *infamies of his sisters*. His portrait by Titian is in the Pitti; a wonderful treatment in color of a disgusting physiognomy. Ariosto calls him “the scourge of princes.” He was rather their sordid adulator, confessing himself to have received from them twenty-five thousand scudi within eighteen years as hush-money for his infamous pen.

death, he was prevailed upon by his spiritual advisers to send her out of his house, it is to be presumed that his mistress had other than merely sensual attractions for him. Nothing has been said to her disadvantage even by the garrulous Vasari, whose sole charge is that she excited so immoderate a love in Raphael as to distract his attention from the frescoes ordered by Agostino Chigi for his villa, now known as the Farnesina. Such may have been the case in the excitement of a first attachment, though, with Passavant, we may not believe that Chigi was unable to prevail upon him to complete those beautiful paintings until he had, "after much difficulty"—an acknowledgment, creditable to her delicacy—prevailed upon the lady to install herself in an apartment adjoining that in which Raphael worked. A dubious remedy, certainly, under the circumstances.

Raphael, so far as is known, was not capricious in love, and formed no permanent attachments among the noble ladies by whom he was surrounded and petted. Disposed to the gentler affections, he greatly enjoyed their society, rendering the sex in general honorable and gallant attention. It was the fashion of the city in which celibacy is exalted into a virtue, to look with complacence on irregular connections like his. Before he was dying, it may be doubted if he ever heard a voice in reprobation. When urged by Cardinal Bibiena to marry his niece, he adroitly parried the subject for several years. His mistress must have had some influence in his desire to escape matrimony, however flattering in rank. It is supposed that he also had expectations of a cardinal's hat himself, as one had been indirectly promised him by Leo X., in consideration of services rendered and of moneys due him by the pontifical government. After waiting the assigned time for postponing the nuptial project, Bibiena again urged it upon

him, and with so much instance as to extort a dubious assent. A difficulty in saying "No" beset Raphael. The marriage went no further than the betrothal, much no doubt to the content of the Fornarina, the lady Maria Bibiena dying before its consummation.

From the first, Raphael's constitution was extremely delicate. His spirit was ever taxing it beyond its capacity of endurance. Long illnesses he did not have. But his life hung always upon a frail thread, which at any moment undue exertion or exposure might rupture. The Roman climate, stimulating to the mental and insidious in its attacks upon the physical system, was calculated to shorten an existence which for health needed the virtuous repose and invigorating air of its Umbrian hills. Ambition to continue to excel, and a desire to execute all that was required of him, added to exposure to malaria in the infected districts of Rome, where he was prosecuting his studies into the antiquities and topography of the ancient city, and particularly a chill received one day while heated, in standing talking with the Pope about the progress of St. Peter's, in one of the cold halls of the Vatican, developed a fever, increased, so it is said, by the injudicious treatment of his physicians, which in a few days carried him off. His death happened on Good Friday, the 7th of April, 1520, in his thirty-seventh year, having previously confessed and received the sacraments. Vasari pleasantly adds, "As he embellished the world by his talents while on earth, so it is to be believed that his soul is now adorning heaven."

The versatile character of Raphael is shown by the variety of his friends and the universal range of his art. His easy-flowing sympathies and happy faculty of adaptation made him at home wherever he went. Hence, he found happiness in mystic, peaceful Umbria, its saintly

associations, and deep repose. In Florence, with equal satisfaction and sincerity he loved Fra Bartolomeo and Ridolfo Ghirlandajo; was alike familiar with its democratic, turbulent citizens, its luxurious aristocrats, and revered the memory of the ascetic Savonarola. At Rome, his favorite was Julio Romano, whose habits and tastes were quite the reverse of his previous associations, while he continued on equally good terms with popes that differed so widely in character as Julius II. and Leo X.

This plasticity was not weakness, but breadth of temperament. Michel Angelo's unyielding character toned all his works. His habits and thoughts, intensely personal, refused to mingle in the ordinary currents of life. Leonardo never projected himself into his art. He created and endowed it by an abstract mental operation based upon the facts of nature. Hence, his chief demand upon the spectator is for intellectual admiration. Michel Angelo, on the contrary, always excites *feeling* of some kind; almost as frequently antipathy as awe. Indeed, their works beget in us similar emotions to those which as men they gave rise to among their contemporaries. But in the works of no other artist does there shine forth a more beautiful individuality, towards which our sympathies irresistibly flow, than in those of Raphael. His genius has a universal language. His feeling goes home to every heart. Whence this mysterious, genial charm that so lovingly affects all humanity?

It is his predominating sensuousness, based, as was the corresponding animating principle of Greek art, upon a nice perception of grace, beauty, and joy in life. His emotional nature was goodness itself. Among his contemporaries, as has already been noted, his figure and countenance were so refined by the dominance of a beautiful spirit as to sug-



gest, in accordance with their religious or classical taste, either the angelic or the Apollo-like man. His attraction, therefore, is in his perfect conception and manifestation of sensuous beauty, elevated and purified by the Christian idea, when he gave play to it, far above the range of classicalism, but at his option full of the feeling of its best pagan estate, at will rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are His. No other has ever possessed the intellectual, sentimental, and sensuous elements of art in an equally sensitive, well-balanced, and cultivated degree. Nature endowed him with its poetry, observation with its knowledge, and religion with its spirituality.

Raphael's organization imperatively demanded Beauty in form and spirit. Our enjoyment of his works is chiefly found in his harmonious union of the two, in action or repose, whether the topic be profane or religious, historical or imaginative. Whatever deficiencies may exist, he casts his magic spell of grace over us, so that we pass them by. Of a keenly susceptible, emotional nature, he invests his creations with vivid and vivacious sentiment, if not always pure in the sense of virtue, always appropriate to the chosen motive. He is equally capable, as in the "*Madonna del Sisto*," of elevating womanhood to its most mystic and divine sense, and, as in his subjects taken from pagan mythology, of infusing them with the fullest measure of a sensuous or sensual spirit, according to their meaning. Prudery would look aghast at some of his renderings of scenes on pagan Olympus. Sometimes the subject in its literalness is unmentionable. While the classical fever was upon him he was as seductive in voluptuous details, as he was chaste in his holy women when painting under the influence of religious ideas. Whatever



he did, he filled it to overflowing with its legitimate feeling. Even in his immodesty there is a delicacy which keeps it apart from the refined lasciviousness of Correggio or the coarser passion of Rubens, and the strong, amorous ecstasy which Titian, Julio Romano, and Paul Veronese frequently put into their sensualities.\* Better it would have been for Raphael's reputation had he never employed his pencil after this manner. But he was sometimes tempted to gratify licentious patrons, who specially delighted in pagan imagery of the passions and in prurient fancies. The nude was his most charming field of display of grace of outline and the language of sensuous sentiment. And of the nude he was, if possible, more happy in the sportive innocence of infancy, of baby angels or delightsome genii, to whose grace of form was added an unfathomable spirituality of expression, than even in the matured charms of womanhood or the robust vigor of manhood. Christian art in great degree forbade the exercise of his genius in this way. Antique art invited it. Hence it was that the same mind that created the Bible histories of the Vatican needed

\* As nearly all of this class of pictures, once more common than people would now credit, are carefully screened from the public eye, and wisely too, we shall not here quote either their localities or the books of engravings in which they are preserved. Let it suffice that we do not exaggerate in the particular characteristics of each artist. At the same time the reader must beware of judging these artists as vulgar sensualists. They were magnificent in their passions, as they were great, facile, and fertile in their invention generally, particularly the stately Venetians, whose noblest qualities were always concentrated on their religious compositions. But all were men of such expanded and universal power,—Julio not ranking with the others,—with so noble a balance of faculties, that whatever they created shone with their soul-fire. Even those emotions of nature, which with the common mind are stained with unradicable grossness or a perverted sense of shame and sin, are by their pencils elevated into a certain spiritual grandeur, such as the Greeks sought to bestow upon their deities, showing the heroic aspect of physical needs, and demonstrating in their splendid way, that, truly understood, God has made nothing unclean. The *soil* comes from man's heart—not from His hand.

only an opportunity to display its creative power in an altogether different direction. This was given by Agostino Chigi for the decorations of his sumptuous palace. Among other classical subjects, Raphael painted the history of "Psyche and Love." A glance at the "Nights of Love," "Jupiter embracing Love," and the "Conclusion of the History," suffices to show his refined, fertile, and graphic sensualism. In others of the series, with less of animal passion there is a charming play of fancy and variety of invention. When his conception of the subject demanded it, in illustrations of sacred history, as in his "Lot and Daughters," he transfuses it with the very spirit of fascinating voluptuousness and amorous dalliance, thus rendering the spectacle more vivid than edifying.

Raphael viewed art neither from the focus of a devotional nor sensualized mind, but in its complete æsthetic light. A subject given, his aim was to render its highest expression, in harmony with the inspiring motive. Although he conscientiously studied nature for details of form, color, and general expression, yet he says in a letter to Baldassare Castiglione, his customary finesse of courtesy blending a compliment with his opinion, "To paint a figure truly beautiful, it might be necessary that I should see many beautiful forms, with the further provision that you should yourself be near to select the best ; but seeing that good judges and beautiful women are scarce, I avail myself of *certain ideas which come into my mind*." A truly modest avowal of an inexhaustible creative power ! But it is a disclosure of his mental method. He looked to nature for hints ; assimilated knowledge from every source, but drew from within himself that subtle idealization which captivates the world.

Raphael's universalism resolves itself into three distinct manners. The primary was the religious, in which he was

influenced both by the sentiments and methods of the purists. He used gold, finished carefully, sought spirituality, and to some extent coerced his imagination into the conventional imagery of the Umbrian school. His compositions of this period are less known than his later. But there is about them an indescribable tenderness and holiness and a picturesque conception of celestial belongings, with a purity of fancy and elevation of sentiment, which prove that the boy, for he can scarcely be considered a man when many of these were done, might have arrived in this style to the highest excellence, had he not so early been diverted to other motives. His angels and archangels, cherubs and seraphs, saints, the women especially, and Madonnas, whether in rapt contemplation or the sweetness of virginal purity, in glorified repose on the clouds of heaven, blessing the sphere they have left by the influence of virtues that descend from them upon it, or in holy contest with omnipresent evil, all possess an interior grace, which quickens the soul to the same extent that their beauty of form and harmonious action delight the eye. His imaginative compositions in general bear the character of improvisation. They exhibit no soul-subduing signs of labor—though labor there is, but seemingly devoid of Eden's curse. As it were, they are *art-less*; the spontaneous creations of a beautiful will that has only to utter "Let them be," and they ARE. And this is the highest quality of all art.

But Raphael had no celestial exemption from the law of Progress; namely, Study. His effects are the result of profound knowledge, keen sensibility, and unwearied application. His advantages lay in his inborn feeling for beauty, varied and facile invention, quick absorption, and graceful recasting in his own mind of the mental wealth of others. In his earlier designs we perceive timidity, con-

straint, and defects of design, and an occasional tendency to mannerism, when overpersuaded by the works of others. The "Madonna del Baldacchino," otherwise a grand and harmonious composition, suitable to devotional decoration, wholly his only in design, is weak and almost insipid in some of the heads and attitudes. But, wherever weak, there is still perceptible the finer elements of soul struggling as it were for richer issue. Raphael was never hasty, careless, nor trifling, like Bazzi. Whatever he undertook, it received his best at the time. Incongruous ornamentation, jarring accessories, or anything not strictly in unity with the motive, his taste rejected, unless forced upon it by exigencies he could not control. His classical subjects breathe the atmosphere of antiquity. They are not servile reproductions of the past, but the re-incarnations of a sympathetic mind of the poetry of a defunct faith. In a letter to a friend, he says, "I would fain resuscitate the forms of antiquity." Towards the Gothic he had scanty desire. His mature sentiment was deeply classical. He conceives "amorina" in the true feeling of the antique. They do not excel, however, the graceful animation and beauty of the cupids and genii which adorned the fashionable residences at Herculaneum in the Augustan age.\* But the marvel is, that he could rival the offspring of imaginations steeped in the faith of their realism. His art recast the Past. No doubt the freer forms of sensuous beauty ripened in the atmosphere of classic art come nearer to his own riper taste than the more conventual creations of strictly Christian feeling. Much of his decorative work of this character was done by his pupils from his designs. The "Galatea" of the Farnesina is mainly his own. What

\* For examples of these spirited and graceful forms, see *Le Pitture Antiche d' Ercolano*. Naples, 1762. Vol. iii. p. 171, *et seq.*

can excel the joyous, sportive consciousness of being, the morning glow of loveliness, the animation of movement, the purity and sweetness of this composition, with its joyous tritons and nymphs escorting the Queen of Beauty, drawn by her foam-fed steeds over the placid billows! His reproductions of the grotesques and arabesques of the Empire are equally beautiful and spirited. Glancing at the fragments of the old in the sepulchral gloom of the subterranean baths of Titus, without plagiarism, Raphael evoked on the instant a similar style of ornamentation in all the freedom and novelty of an original thought.

Raphael's classical designs belong to his third and last manner, derived from his associations with the modern taste and the antiquities of Rome, to which city Julius II. had invited him in 1508, he being then in his twenty-fifth year. Previous to this he had painted one mythological subject, that of the "Three Graces," which seems to have been suggested to him by the antique group of sculpture of the same subject now in the Academy at Siena. This picture has, however, an Umbrian flavor of landscape still lingering upon it. With the exception of their execution, which corresponds to the best period of his technical power, there is much in the naïve beauty and freshness of feeling of his designs derived from the antique to recall his earlier religious art, although the motives originating each are so distinct. His boy angels are every whit as successful as his cupids; his Virgin is as perfect a being in her way as his Venus, and he never confuses the elements of either class of conceptions. To every ideal type of character, in its special variety in unity, Raphael is unimpeachably loyal. Neither Rubens, Rembrandt, Correggio, nor even Titian, stands beside him in this lofty attribute. They intermingle the classical, sacred, and profane, in their attempts at por-



traying their forms, after a manner which indicates poverty of spiritual conception. Raphael alone, on all occasions, adheres perfectly to all the proprieties of religious motives and pure instincts of the heart. Who so successful in the innocence and artlessness of infancy; the purity and tenderness of maternity; virginal chastity, and the mystic forebodings of the atoning sacrifice in the divine mother and son; often called to repeat the same topic, yet never repeating himself! This matchless variety is his special triumph. Each composition is a new phase of action and emotion. The Madonna was the object of his particular devotion. How much of that which is purest and most sanctified in womanhood he may have derived from his recollections of that early-lost mother the world can never know; but there was evidently an adored and faultless image cherished in the inmost recesses of his heart; for that domestic love which beams upon us from his Holy Families could scarcely have existed in him without a joy and peace in his own infancy.

Raphael is always spiritual, though in its religious sense he never attains the ethereality of Fra Angelico. His holy figures are of earth, substantial, well modelled, and transported in all their materiality of flesh to the upper spheres, illumined by celestial light, but not yet born anew of it. They have weight and solidity, and their draperies are actual clothing, suggesting the physical form beneath. The most exalted of the purists were more successful than he in putting off the corruptible and putting on the incorruptible, harmonizing both features and drapery in their celestialities more according to the conditions of heavenly being, in the highest sense of the imagination. His earliest pictures, in tempera, were purer, and clearer in tones than his later. As the artistic gradually outgrew the religious sentiment,



he gave himself up more to the dexterities of light and shade, commingling of colors to strengthen effects, and attempts to aggrandize his style, using darker tints, which time, after the manner it usually treats oils, has greatly deepened, to the irreparable loss of their primitive transparency and delicacy. Excessive attention to the mechanism of art, in him, as with every other artist, weakened its loftier significance. His last picture, the "Transfiguration," has become dry and heavy, on account of his experimentative innovations on his primitive method of coloring, while in point of religious sentiment, though intended for his masterpiece, it is almost null. The entire composition is artificial, failing in the historical elements of the scene, incongruous in its intermingling of sixteenth century monks and a mixed crowd of men and women as witnesses of a spectacle seen only by Peter, John, and James, and incorporating in it the incident of the maniac boy, which happened "on the next day, when they were come down from the hill." In reality it is two pictures of distinct events and periods of time, objectionable from its forced perspective, and so confused in its religious meaning that it requires study and explanation to correctly interpret it. True, its masterly details are worthy of Raphael. But in judging it from the earlier religious point of view, in which much was pardoned to art if the sentiment was clear and impressive, or from its more proper position, that of the work of the world's greatest painter in the maturity of his knowledge, when he most rigidly observed æsthetic laws, — in either aspect it disappoints. The motive, however, in the case of the possessed of an evil spirit pointing to the transfigured Saviour in the clouds of heaven as the only source of help, is truly noble. It is interesting to compare the designs for this celebrated work with the fin-

ished picture. In the former the figures of the several groups above and below are nude, vigorously drawn and composed, awaiting their drapery. Moses and Elias on either side of Christ, all three posing in the heavens, with their extremities in somewhat violent movement, are in a state of nature, with each anatomical detail given with all the truthful precision of the great master of design. While showing his conscientious study and how he arrived at giving to his drapery such perfect adaptation of character to the form and idea, these studies have a droll effect upon the sanctities of the composition. It is like a look behind the scenes of a theatre.

Raphael's second manner, the intermediate between the Umbrian and Roman, had for its foundation the naturalism of the Florentine school. It began about 1504, and continued in vogue with him after his arrival at Rome. Before leaving Florence he was so well satisfied with his progress as to wish to contest the laurels of painting with the only artists from whom he had anything to fear, Leonardo and Buonarrotti, by a rival composition to be placed alongside of theirs in the Palazzo Vecchio. To this effect he was making interest with the gonfaloniere when summoned to Rome to paint the state apartments of the Vatican. Although disappointed in the direct competition he challenged, this new field afforded him the amplest scope for contesting their superiority. More fortunate than they, while their cartoons that fired his ambition have perished, his works remain to this day. There is no evidence of any personal intercourse between Leonardo and Raphael, but there is more affinity of style between them, and also the manner and motives of Masaccio, than between him and Michel Angelo. He carried to Rome many graceful reminiscences of the best Florentines, to be incorporated into his own composi-

tions, especially the "Ascending Saviour" of an unknown artist, now a ruined fresco in an outbuilding attached to the church of San Miniato, but which neither in expression nor movement is improved in his "Transfiguration."

Kugler gives a detailed criticism of the well-known paintings of the Stanze of the Vatican. We have space only to refer to their general character. In them Raphael broadly and forcibly develops his invention and powers of execution, ranging through both with marvellous freedom, ingenuity, strength, and grace, saving a few drawbacks in certain figures and certain licenses of thought, which, however, show his daring. They combine the allegorical, historical, ideal, individualistic, classical, and religious elements in copious variety of naturalistic and poetical treatment, profound thought, and devotional feeling, with a fertility and richness of fancy and imagination and a complete sympathy with his diversified topics, unequalled, especially when his youth is considered, in the history of painting.

Raphael is akin to Giotto in his rare faculty of interpenetrating his subject with soul-like expression, warm from his own exuberant nature, and vital with those emotions that give it appropriate variety. He perfected what Masaccio began in historical art, and excepting the matchless spirituality of Fra Angelico, he centred in himself and carried out to their fullest development, the varied aims and motives of the several branches of Etruscan painting. Leonardo was more scientifically exact. Michel Angelo excelled in intensity and grandeur. But apart from these great artists, he stands the highest even in these qualities. His idealization of the human figure escapes the approach to affectation, in the females, of the one, and the muscular exaggeration of the other. At the same time, he seldom soars to the supernatural. But his "Ezekiel" and "Heliodorus"

evinced his rare capacity for the sublime. The chief secret of his success lies in his wonderful flow of lines. They adjust themselves to his thoughts with astonishing grace and spontaneity. Apart from the figure, his drapery is not only a thing of beauty but suggests the idiosyncrasy of its object. Character permeates it. His symmetrical grouping is classical in its unity and harmony, and although, as his vigorous portraits show, the Etruscan element of individualism was strong upon him, yet his delight was rather in the principles of Grecian idealization. Whatever he copies is thoroughly naturalistic. Whenever he creates, he manifests a classical regard for grace, dignity, and beauty. It would require an infinitude of observations to do even scant justice to the matchless variety and power of his genius. There is meaning in his every line, motion, and feature. His power over sentiment was wonderful. In hue, compared with the Venetians, he appears dry and almost sombre, especially in many of his later works; but some of his frescoes and easel pictures are richly and effectively colored. The subjects by which he is most popularly known are his Holy Families. Beautiful and varied as they are, they but partially attest his genius. Without following him through his entire range of composition it is impossible to get an adequate conception of it. Judged by the amount and variety of his labors, crowded into less than twenty years, of the highest and purest art, he ranks above all other painters. The good fortune that attended him during life has continued to operate to preserve his works, and time constantly strengthens his reputation. The waves even respected his celebrated "Lo Spasimo," now at Madrid, alone of the crew and merchandise of a wrecked vessel, in which it had been freighted for Sicily, and bore it safely to the shores of the Gulf of Genoa,

whence it was only recovered at the cost of a large salvage and powerful interest. Every authentic fragment or drawing of his is now held as a priceless relic. Considerable confusion has arisen in public collections from too hastily attributing to his hands the works of his numerous scholars from his designs. Numbers of pictures ascribed to him bear only partial evidence of his touch. But as no other artist has given occasion to more varied and learned criticism, so time is slowly sifting the genuine from the doubtful, and securely placing Raphael upon the artistic eminence justly his due.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Other Italian Schools. Scholars of Leonardo and Raphael. Correggio. The Decline of the Florentine School. Extinction of Religious Sentiment. The new Taste of the Times. Correggio's License. Giovanni di S. Giovanni's indecorous Fresco at Fiesole. The Eclectics of Bologna. De Brosses's Opinion of Early Masters. French and English public Taste of the last Century. Object in reviewing Christian Painting. Its three Aspects. First, the Theological, its Character. Secondly, the Religious and its two Branches. Danger of undue Reverence for the Past. Mistake of Modern Artists. The third Aspect, or the Naturalistic. Its Origin, past and present Condition, and Promise. Distinction between the Catholic and Protestant Phases of Art. Relative Strength and Weakness. Tendencies, Needs, and Results, as the Fruit of their Elementary and Fundamental Antagonisms. The Future of Painting. Its Exaltation inseparable from Religion, as in past Times. Quality of its future Aspirations and Teachings. A limitless Field of Invention open to it. Author's Parting Wish.

WITH Raphael our present scope of inquiry closes. It would require another volume to trace the history of Tuscan painting past its climax through its degeneracy to its present impotency.\* Beside the other Italian schools, those of Parma, Mantua, and Ferrara, the Lombard, Genoese, Bolognese, Roman, and Neapolitan, more strongly invite examination, should the subject be continued at a future period. Especially are some of them rich in influences derived from the three great Representative artists whose lives we have just scanned, and whose chief scholars deserve fuller mention than simply their names. Bernardino

\* An unfinished painting by Ussi, "The Expulsion of the Duke of Athens from Florence," a large historical composition of much merit, is indicative of the reawakening of artistic as well as of political life in Tuscany.



Luini's reputation is intimately blended with Da Vinci's fame. Their works have often been confounded, though he lacks the scientific strength of his master, while possessing a vivacity, tenderness, and graceful dignity peculiarly his own. His feeling is more poetical, slightly tempered with religious melancholy and a feminine delicacy of touch and sentiment. Salai (Andrea Salaino), Francesco Melzi, and Cesare da Sesto, the last finally adopting the Roman manner of Raphael, are the chief of Leonardo's immediate scholars. Beside Julio Romano, Raphael's most noted disciples were Perino del Vaga, Gianfrancesco Penni, Andrea di Salerno, Timoteo delle Vite, Benvenuto Tisio (Garofolo), Giovanni da Udine, and Pellegrino da Modena. Cotignola of Bologna, a rare and meritorious painter, combined much of the feeling and manner both of Francia and Raphael, in whose school he studied. Not to speak of the grave, heroic magnificence of the Venetians, a school so noble, prolific, and rich in meaning as to demand for itself a distinct analysis, nor of the extravagant romanticism and blood-fed naturalism of the more distinguished Neapolitans, Correggio's highly wrought sensuousness and delicate perception of the romance of hue; his unstinted richness of tints and lavish labor, his sympathy with the actual joy of being and the exaltation of sense above spirit; his peculiar exaggerations and charms of style, the spontaneous growth of an individuality distinct from all other artists, rank him as a Representative painter, demanding special and wary investigation, lest his very faults lead reason captive. It is a tempting prospect to pursue the subject through its varied phases of thought and feeling as indicated above; but more than enough, we fear, has already been attempted to test the public appetite for this sort of knowledge. Besides, thus far it has had an interest

which it would soon cease to possess: for it is more delightful to follow the Advance than the Decline of any form of civilization. After the death of Tintoretto in 1594, there are but few names in any of the above schools remarkable for other than specific technical excellences or peculiarities of style. They imparted to painting no new motives nor did they equal the greatness of their predecessors; though, as with Caravaggio, Salvator Rosa, Claude Lorraine, and the Poussins,—the latter though French by birth, Italian in residence and inspiration,—new tastes came into vogue, popularized by their skilful execution. Leaving them however to such distinctions as they merit, we return to Tuscan territory. Here, as at Rome where the same sort of mongrel priestly and princely patronage was rife, the decadence not only of high art but genuine art of every character was most rapid. Michel Angelo was the last of the great Tuscans. After him came mannerism and poverty of invention, bigness succeeding to greatness, the display of attitude to harmony of movement;—in short, faults of every nature, weakness, coldness, and thinness of color, technical errors and exaggerations, a prolific crop of artistic weeds, covered this rich soil, varied but not redeemed by the superficial merits of artists like Cristofano Allori (1577-1621), Cigoli (1559-1613), Jacobo di Empoli (1554-1640), Francesco Furini (1604-1646), and Giovanni di S. Giovanni (1590-1636), most of whom were clever in portraiture. But what we have particularly to note is the utter extinction of religious feeling, and with it a corresponding debasement in manner and composition. Even Vasari, whose life and whose appreciation of the early masters were unexceptionable, is one of the most striking examples of technical degeneracy and poverty of motives. The full-blown Medicean tyranny of

church and state had sapped alike the foundations of morality and intellect. Cellini gives an animated account of the dissoluteness and violence among his contemporaries of the pencil and chisel, their unworthy intrigues and the corresponding social peculiarities of this epoch,—a period in which a successful artist had ample reason to dread the dagger or poison of a rival. His personal confessions are not the most transparent of the shadows he paints in the pictures of his times. The sentimental and superficial, though clever, Federigo Baroccio (1528–1612), who had a commission to execute in the Vatican, was obliged to fly from Rome on account of an attempt to poison him while at work. Other instances of characteristic crime have already been related. Painting in Florence was now represented by the prolific Agnolo Bronzino, a pupil of Pontormo, and his nephew Alessandro Allori (1535–1607), both but indifferent artists compared with their great predecessors.

Notwithstanding the myriads of vapid church pictures that continued to be manufactured to supply the exigencies of the rapidly increasing altars and image-worship in Italy, an increase provoked by opposition to the idolatry-hating and image-destroying tendencies of the Lutheran Reformation, but which had no real foundation in piety, the dominant feeling in art was anti-religious. The best talent went to pagan or profane subjects. “Do not paint me any saints or such like things, but something pleasing and agreeable,” wrote Frederic of Este to Sebastiano del Piombo. The ascendancy of the religious sentiment in painting, based upon the dogmas and traditions of the Church, was at an end. Even Correggio, as early as 1526–30, in which years he painted his celebrated frescoes of the “Assumption of the Virgin,” in the Duomo of Parma, was so overborne by the growing fashion of his epoch, which, indeed,

his genius greatly encouraged, that he sacrificed the legitimate sentiment of his composition to violent foreshortening and exaggerated action, provoking from his clerical critics the satirical comparison of a "hash of frogs' legs." Both his desire and the sympathies of his audience were widely apart from the old devout feeling that inspired art. He painted in the parlor of the convent of St. Paolo, to the great delight of the gay abbess and her light nuns, a series of mythological subjects representing the Graces, Bacchus nursed by Leucothea, Lucina, Satyrs, Fates, stories from the myths of Diana, Juno, Minerva, Endymion, Adonis, and other pagan fancies, so sensuously beautiful as to put to flight every ascetic idea, and in stricter times to subject them to a decorous veil of whitewash, and the ladies to the unwelcome discipline of the Church, and a more rigorous obedience to their vows. In fact, scandal was not confined to the walls of sacred edifices in these loose times, but was deeply ingrained in the characters of their inmates. One of the most conspicuous exhibitions of utter disregard of sacred proprieties is still to be seen in the refectory of the Badia at Fiesole, in a fresco of Giovanni di S. Giovanni, a century later than the preceding example, but whether done from sheer levity or utter incapacity to otherwise treat a religious theme, one now is at a loss to decide. The subject is "Christ fed by Angels." The Saviour is a jovial young man, seated in the open air at a café table with its usual garnish, partaking with much relish of delicate viands, game, fruit, and wine, surrounded by attendant angels of all sizes, vulgar, mischievous, and tipsy-looking. Some are flying through the air laden with dishes after the most approved *garçon* style; one little fellow is bitterly crying over a broken plate of ortolans that he has let fall; a companion is slyly pointing to Jesus with a mischievous

chuckle, comforting him with the assurance of a sound thrashing; three others are scrambling for a dish of cherries; and on the right, sneaking off through the underbrush, dressed as a monk, but with his usual appendages distinctly visible, is the devil, who, having approached on mischief intent, has just been detected by a group of courageous angelic urchins, who furiously pelt him with stones. The coloring is warm, and the design free and vigorous.

Nunziata, a scholar of Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, affords another memorable instance of the growing levity of the times in what related to religious art. A citizen ordered of him a Virgin that should be painted in a chaste manner in accordance with her character. He gave him a Madonna with a beard. For another, who wished a Crucifix for his summer-house, he painted a Christ on the cross without other drapery than a pair of stockings.

Leaving these examples of vitiated taste, the intellectual Carracci and their academic followers demand a passing notice. There is much in the eclectic school of Bologna which claims respect and admiration, though the principle at its root, that of learned selection and combination from all other schools, to the intent to cull out their good and recast it according to prescribed æsthetic rules, was one to which true genius could never have given its assent. A great master creates his art out of his own imagination, going to nature only for auxiliary truths, as did Leonardo and Michel Angelo. Or, if he make use of the progress of another to help on his own, he borrows an idea only, and recasts it, like Raphael, in the mould of his own mind, giving to it an entirely new soul.

This, however, was not the meaning of the eclecticism of the later Bolognese painters. Their system was an impracticable one of seeking to unite, according to theoretical



rules, into a new and perfect whole, the varied excellences they coveted in those great masters who were their models in painting. From one they proposed to borrow symmetry and the rules of composition; from another, invention; a third would teach them "management of shade;" a fourth, "dignified color;" some, natural truth; others, strength of design; Correggio, "sovereign purity" of style; Parmigianino, a "*little* grace;" and thus, after a receipt, as it were, which gives one more the idea of cookery than of painting, they were to form a new and more perfect æsthetic ideal than the world had yet seen. An error so fatal to artistic originality and unity needed but the attempt to be put into practice to receive from itself its own death-stroke. Widely differing qualities could no more unite into one homogeneous whole than clay and iron. The very attempt implied the destruction of that individuality in art which is its vital force. Accordingly, this shallow, incongruous theory of imitation did not long predominate with the clever artists with whom it originated. They copied largely and studied intently for a while the merits of their predecessors, but they also made nature the basis of their teaching. Theirs was a purely intellectual system, calculated to develop talent, to teach the theory and practice of art according to established rules, and to define and extend taste; in fact, to oppose orderly method and scientific, regular progress, to the lawless habits and crude inventions of those painters, then numerous and influential, who followed no other guides than their erratic wills and a superficial glance at nature, and were more ambitious to astonish or dazzle than to win truth or create beauty.

As a check to artists of this stamp and a counter-current to their barbarisms, the eclectics did good service to art. And as there were among them really great artists, despite



the hindrances of an erroneous and cumbersome system, they have left behind them works which bear the impress not only of conscientious study, but of elevated thought and fertile invention. Their aim was much above the common, and their scope universal. Christianity, paganism, history, the landscape, the passions and sentiments, furnished them with exhaustless topics, which, sustained by a highly cultivated fancy or imagination, they treated upon a dignified level of taste, and with a serious view of the æsthetic claims of art. A subject given,—by their rules and knowledge, a clever picture and sometimes a great one was the result. There was not with them, as with the earlier masters, a powerful inward force of individual character impelling them in a certain direction and producing marked contrasts with all other art. Their individuality was rather that of personal taste in the choice and manner of treatment than of a highly individual genius making for itself a new and deep channel in its onward course. Consequently, their art has a decided impression of *school*, and among their best men, as among their more ordinary, there is a certain uniformity of cleverness and common stamp of method. We find masterly drawing, accurate modelling, copious and pleasing invention, harmonious coloring, inclined, however, to weak or cold tints, and too often a sort of ostentation of manual dexterities or the externals of art. That which is most lacking is the soul-power which genius alone can supply, and without which all art is emotionless.

Of the brothers Carracci, Annibale (1555–1619) was the most distinguished, though all were clever and popular. Guercino (1590–1666), Guido (1575–1642), Albani (1578–1660), Sassoferato (1605–1685), and Domenichino (1581–1641), are familiar to every lover of paint-

ings, being those masters most generally to be seen in galleries, and hitherto the most frequently copied for the popular taste. In relative position in art they are now taking the place in the scale of criticism which they undoubtedly would have adjudicated to themselves; an honorable one, but still inferior to those that *they* looked up to for instruction. Domenichino, without being inspired by the highest motives of art, still has very great merit. He manifests a free conception of character, a lively and fertile fancy, well-adjusted accessories, broad, masterly treatment of drapery, much spirit, excellent taste, and pleasing movement. He is warmer in color and more natural than Guido, whose types are abstract and ideal; coldly classical, without force or passion and equally rapid in tint, but with attractive movement, and much beauty of form and grace of composition.

Our intention, at present, is simply to allude to the artists of this school, and that only as marking an epoch beyond which in Italy painting manifested a rapid and continuous decline, affecting the standard of taste elsewhere to a lamentable degree, so that not only noble effort and noble work alike disappeared, but the faculty of discerning the true and beautiful departed also. A few examples of this degeneracy are worth noting.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Charles de Brosses, a highly cultivated Frenchman of rank, travelling in Italy, thus speaks of the frescoes of the Campo Santo at Pisa. "*Les murs sont tous peints à fresque de la main de Giotto, d'Orgagna, de Benetto, etc., d'une manière fort bizarre, fort ridicule, parfaitement méchante, et très curieuse.*"\* This curt criticism affords an adequate idea of the

\* *Lettres Historiques et Critiques sur L'Italie.* Paris, an. 7. In 1581, Montaigne, then on his travels in Italy, thus with indifference alludes to them: "*Les murs sont couverts d'anciennes peintures, parmi lesquelles il y en a d'un*

opinions entertained by intellectual men of the early masters up to the revival of the more correct taste and juster discrimination of motives of this century. Diderot, however, in writing of Boucher, points out the true cause of the decline of art and taste which obtained in France in the last century. He says, "This debasement of taste, color, composition, character, expression, and drawing has followed step by step on that of morals." In England, at the same period, there was less immorality, but greater ignorance. Sir Joshua Reynolds sneered at the Umbrian school, particularly the early manner of Raphael, as "dry and insipid." With equally indiscriminating criticism, he calls the earlier painting of Italy barbarous, averring that before Masaccio "every figure appeared to stand upon its toes;" a statement untrue in itself, and showing that he carelessly adopted the phraseology of his times without that examination into its soundness which historical candor demands. But Hogarth, who was still less eclectic in knowledge and more thoroughly English in his feeling, even more emphatically represents the tone of his country in his day. He saw in the mystic symbol of cherubim and seraphim, so grandly and beautifully rendered and with such holy meaning by the great masters, only "an infant's head with a pair of duck's wings under its chin, supposed to be always flying about and singing psalms," and in one of his plates, "Enthusiasms Delineated," he actually added duck's legs to a cherub.\* These are significant facts of the interpretation put upon sacred art by the cultivated classes of England a century since, paralleled to a lamentable extent by the indifference or ridicule of intelligent people in America in our day. But the great change already brought

*Gondi de Florence, tige de la maison de ce nom."* Œuvres de Montaigne, p. 736. Paris, 1850.

\* *Dukes of Urbino*, vol. ii. p. 162.

about in the mother country by a sounder criticism and greater sympathy with the past, is but anticipatory of what must also occur in our own, as the knowledge of art is diffused and its works become accessible. We shall also find beauty in the myths of Christian art equally with those of pagan origin. Just as far as the truth of Christianity is in advance of the truth of paganism, so should its art rise superior to that of paganism. There is a science of æsthetics in spirituality as well as in materiality; a science which Savonarola recognized and to which Fra Angelico gave pictorial utterance. So, also, a superiority of feeling obtains in Christian art because of the absolute holiness of its motives. But religious artists, as yet, so far from exhausting their fountain of inspiration, have only hinted to us, as it were, its marvellous depth and flow. The men we have named, with all their spirituality, are but infants in that suggestiveness of progress opened to the soul through Revelation. Hence, the spread of science is but the preparatory step—divine insight being bestowed upon genius, chosen of Heaven for its work—towards new flights of artistic invention, shaping ideas into forms which shall move our souls with as earnest and intelligible feeling as did the olden art—childish or obsolete though it now seems to the multitude—those to whom it appealed. Blake, the mad painter, but mad only as Paul was before Festus, has given modernism new incarnations of divine things, unintelligible to material eyes, but filled with deep significance to those whose horizon is not bounded by dogma or matter. So, too, Ary Scheffer faintly suggests the infinity of the soul's range and power of etherealizing substance to its own idea of spiritual action. But before inquiring into the future of Christian painting, it will be useful to briefly review the ground we have gone over.

Our aim has been to present its three distinct aspects in their chronological sequence, to trace their relations to civilization, and to discover what each has accomplished.

First came the Theological, or that which was born of the primitive art of the Catacombs; a creation wholly of the Church; a slave to its dogmas, without any true, inherent, artistic vitality; a simple incarnation of faith, doctrines, and traditions; not to be criticised as art proper, but as an incarnation of the current theology; zeal without knowledge; devotion without liberty; symbolical in intent, but idolatrous in practice. Its roots being deeply fixed in ignorance and superstition, it still remains in vogue wherever, as in the Orient, Russia, and Greece, the popular mind is spellbound by infallible authority, and is under the same technical conditions which have been its inheritance for fifteen centuries, varied only at rare intervals by gleams of individual genius or the force of classical traditions, which have had, however, no permanent influence upon it as a whole. No matter how lamentable the quality of its art, the æsthetic faculties are irresponsible for its features, because, as we have learned, theological dictation permitted to it neither choice nor progress. To the enlightened mind the value of this art is merely historical, as illustrative of a peculiar mystic development of the religious sentiment, tending to idolatrous externals, ascetic habits, and stationary thought. It is adverse to inquiry, intolerant of change, idolizing blind faith and unquestioning obedience. Now we gaze curiously upon it, as a spectral image of the Past. Its purpose being fulfilled and its energy extinct, it quietly recedes everywhere as it comes in contact with a loftier standard of reason and liberty.

Secondly, contemporaneous with the mental activity of the thirteenth century, was the Religious aspect of its art,



with a progressive tendency in the highest motives for upwards of three hundred years, because, although the offspring of faith and doctrine, it asserted to itself æsthetic freedom of choice and execution. Perfection was its aim, guided by truth with the noble purpose of teaching and bearing witness to the most important interests of the present and future life. Still its freedom was limited. Apart from the rightful province of art itself, as the recording spirit of *all* truth and beauty with *entire* liberty of action, it was shackled to a special mission by a dominant creed, which, although it afforded it the loftiest and most spiritual motives painting had as yet received, yet denied to it breadth of purpose and full latitude of action. Dividing itself into two branches, the one became mystic and spiritual in an exalted degree, burning and luminous with the interior sense of things, aspiring through ecstatic feeling to the unseen, severe, pure, graceful, and serene—and suggestive too of holiness—beyond all art before or since. The other, basing itself upon the facts and forms of nature as its mode of expression, with a bias as decided for the tangible and seen as was its counter-current of that inspiration which comes of faith, expanded into a wider and, to the world at large, a more sympathetic and intelligible stream; the two giving origin to schools of painting whose nobility of thought, dignity, and beauty of execution, as seen in their greatest masters, have never been surpassed. But the art that was directly born of mediæval religious feeling is now extinct. Its vitality withered before the reaction produced by its own one-sided indulgence. Beautiful it was and ever will be in its remains, as the poetical and angelic side of the Catholic creed; instructive too, as an example to what extent art can be purified and ennobled by heaven-descended inspiration; edifying also, as a warning that it parts not with the



slightest fraction of its æsthetic independence, whether exclusively to religion or sense, without final detriment to that true, tender, and beautiful service which art, when rightly apprehended, performs for man. However much we may venerate the Past, either under Grecian or Gothic forms, we must remember that both are irrevocably gone. Each issued from certain mental conditions that can never be repeated by history.

In art, more than in other things, there is danger of overmuch reverence for what lies behind us. Respect and veneration are to be enjoined for intellectual uses. Even though we may not fully comprehend the civilization of a past epoch, it is no less incumbent upon us to preserve its souvenirs for the benefit of those by whom they may eventually come to be more fully appreciated. It is indeed a duty to treasure up the knowledge of our predecessors, though to worship dead men's bones is the worst of follies. He who saw deepest into Humanity said "Let the dead bury their dead." This has a wide application to all human action, and is especially pertinent to art. Too many artists do nought else but look back. Forward, they have the vision of moles. But their eyes peer earnestly into the retreating ages, to catch the waifs of antiquity and to seize upon the creations of olden men, tormenting their spirits if so be they haunt their former labors, and disappointing us by the stale reproduction of ideas and forms from which faith and feeling having forever fled, we can have no real sympathy for them. Hence it is that our modern studios abound with the beings of classical mythology, pagan tradition, or Jewish story. Hence also is it that, with a periodical surfeit of such repetitions, no hearty response comes from the public to sustain art. Judiths, Hebes, and Cleopatras had a personal meaning in their own ages.

These, and other often-imitated forms, were then incarnations of living facts and emotions. Their presence warmed the blood and inspired the intellect. Now they excite but æsthetic interest or historical inquiry. Their special mission seems to be to betray the poverty of invention and the inability of the modern artist to read the handwriting of Nature on the walls of the Present, which, if he would but learn to interpret it, would furnish him with an inexhaustible fountain of motives akin to its own hopes and aspirations.

In reviewing the third aspect of painting, which we have termed the Naturalistic, and tracing its career as the parent of our art, we shall briefly inquire into its promise for the future. Its general characteristics were recorded in Chapter V. Originating with the school of Masaccio, inspired by religion, nurtured by science, broad and lofty in its choice of themes, firmly planting itself upon the domain of Fact, withal nobly ideal, yet it overlooked as a whole the widest field of art. While seeking to infuse the Truth of nature into its inherited religious themes, and coquetting with landscape or disinterring the spirit and forms of pagan art, it overlooked that province of choice which not only offers the amplest scope to painting, but which in natural artistic sequence, the æsthetic will being free, would seem to be the first to invite attention, as being the broadest foundation of progress. But with all the infused vigor and latitude of naturalism, Italian painting did not realize complete æsthetic independence; for, on the one hand, religion devoted its genius to Worship, while, on the other, such scepticism or reaction as was generated out of its one-sidedness looked back for inspiration and relaxation to the sensuous or sensual imagery of classical art, once itself the expression of worship, but now, its faith defunct and symbolism forgotten, revived only as an intellectual amusement,

or a novel stimulant to the senses. Hence it was that, while the principles of naturalism became the guide to æsthetic progress, they were not sufficiently independent of religion or fashion to perceive the full extent and value of what Nature in her universal aspect opened up to them. This was reserved for the new development of human liberty ushered into being by Protestantism. Under the Catholic system of a dominant faith and ritual admitting neither inquiry nor change, the mind either revolves within a prescribed circle of ideas, which are authoritatively administered to it as infallible, or it rebels at such irrational procedure, and escapes from bigotry into inward unbelief and outward conformity. Its art, therefore, is constantly tending to the extremes of spirituality and sensuality; the loftiest suggestiveness and the lowest sensations; but invariably making MAN, and his destinies future and present, its theme. Thus the individualism of the artist, although it had ample scope in execution, was prescribed in motive, his province being to teach what he was bound to receive upon ecclesiastical dictum, under peril, if he demurred, to soul and body. Dissent consequently became rebellion. Compromise had no other outlets than absolute infidelity or Protestantism; the former tolerated while dumb, the latter persecuted as a mortal enemy.

The instincts of absolutism are as wonderfully keen as its weapons are pliable and deadly. It felt at the first shock of the exercise of reason in the individual, directed to matters of faith and authority, that its days were numbered, unless the new-fledged liberty was strangled in its cradle. Hence its hatred and horror at that principle of civilization which permits the individual to elect his God and government. Protestantism was to the man what the idea of "divine right" was to pope and king; the

charter of his power. It included the true germ of progress, inasmuch as it recognized the full dignity and responsibility of the human soul. Basing its strength upon the inherent virtues of humanity, it now seeks through reason to reconcile man with his Maker; to elevate his character by the *exercise* of his faculties in all those interests which concern him in life or death. Simply put, it transfers the responsibility of being and doing from the church or state to the individual. All Protestantism that departs from this fundamental principle ignores its own life-sap. Much that exists is indeed bastard, because it apes Papal power without any sustaining idea. At the best, Protestantism thus far has led but a checkered and inconsistent career. It has itself been grossly intolerant. Though born of reason, it often stands aghast at reason. Its individualism is leavened both with absolutism and with anarchism. It is impatient of inquiry and timid at scepticism. It is fragmentary, incredulous, and credulous, disposed to extremes. Springing from individual reason and liberty, it has partaken of the Protean passions and speculations of its multitudinous parentage. Thus far its condition is that of transition. Its ultimate issues have not been reached. But while its rival looks backward for support, Protestantism consistently fixes its gaze ahead. Hence it is synonymous with progress. And thus it has happened that, by the resistance of individual reason and personal rights to absolute rule and "divine right," humanity for several centuries has been making hopeful advances. Protestantism is itself assuming a more harmonious form as its true meaning develops. And out of its infinite variety of thought and experiment there slowly appears a unity of purpose, an intellectual fraternity, and a sodality of material welfare that augur cheerily for our ripening civilization.

Rightly comprehended, Protestantism, or rather the religious principle born of it, teaches the Nobility of this Life, in distinction from the ascetic doctrine of its ignobleness. Not as with the Greek idea, simply for enjoyment, with a heroic or stoic unconcern of the Future, but in perfect Repose as regards the solution of the great problem of Death, the while exercising with healthful activity and unselfish desire all the faculties with which God has endowed humanity. In no way may it better show its faith than by trusting the Instincts HE has created; avoiding alike the base Fear of asceticism, whether nurtured in Catholic or Protestant brains, with its mean longing for death as a means of escape from the discipline of life, and the narrow joy of the classical mind in its sensuous pleasures. The modern idea of Life is WORK; "*to replenish the earth and to subdue it*" ultimately to the power of holiness and condition of uses, as man was bidden to do by its Maker. But to do this well we must cast out every devil of Fear, whether it be of Him or of Ourselves, His Image; taking to our hearts instead the angels of Obedience, Love, Freedom, and Trust. It is all vanity and vexation to be forever contemplating an escape into some far-off condition of eternal being, as a panacea for the evils of this life. Far better is it to realize the heaven that is *here* waiting for every one who opens his heart and mind to its gifts, free, upon the sole condition of knocking and asking; which means, using our present as if it was to be our eternal home; and not indulging in that fatal delusion that, by dodging the labor and duties given to be done *now*, we may sneak or whine our way into a heaven at last.

Thus much it is necessary to define our idea of Protestantism before proceeding to connect the present and future of painting with it. In this analysis it must be kept



steadily in view that art, whether of faith, feeling, or fact, is but one form of the poetry of civilization; as it is based upon its standard of spirit and aspiration, it cannot rise above the level of its fountain-head; its quality depends upon the imagination; its execution upon knowledge; and thus, Protestantism possessing unrestricted liberty of choice, the responsibility of progress rests no longer upon the government but the individual. When the religious and theological pressure was removed from art, its direction naturally turned to the homely and common. Domestic life, the popular aspects of the external world, the passions and affections, interests and tastes, habits and associations of the people, became its favorite themes. It forsook the church for the household. Its governing religious principle was the opposite of the Catholic idea. Anti-worship; thou shalt not make to thyself images to fall down before them; these were the watchwords of the new art which came in with the reformation of the sixteenth century. Hence the holy horror of our fathers to sculpture and painting that savored of the creed they had repudiated. Hence their tendency to the other extreme, whose frigid decorum and barrenness of life's beauty fittingly represented what was nearest their hearts. But must we stop on the threshold of art? Are imitations of classicalism and the commonplaces of naturalism to be our final limits?

No.

Why not?

To answer this, let us first examine the present condition of art in relation to its loftiest source of inspiration, Religion. We repeat that neither under the Catholic nor Protestant idea does there now exist any living religious art. Hints, yes, of hopeful things in the latter. The



vital spiritual element of the former has long been extinguished. Its sensual successes and hybrid classicalism, were but a fashion and soon spent themselves. Retrogression and exaltation, each springing from limited sources, having run out, Catholic painting at present exhibits utter decay. It exists only in soulless imitations, impoverished by the quality of that patronage to which in its degradation it sold itself. Catholic countries proper, Italy and Spain for instance, in which art once was so accomplished, are now bereft of lofty genius. But painting with them only partakes of that universal inanition which overtook all those nations that stifled Individualism in Theocratic Absolutism. The "divine right" of tyranny not merely blighted humanity in its fairest sites and barred its progress, but made it a mean and pitiful thing, so far as it could dominate the soul and pervert it to cruel and selfish ends. Philip II. of Spain and Louis XIV. of France are notable examples of what moral, intellectual, and industrial ruin mongrel priest and kingcraft, sustained by a popular faith in an infallibility true only of God himself, may bring upon gallant nations.\* And we are now witnesses that the only real life among Catholic peoples is in the degree of their vigorous and continuous protest against those pernicious assumptions of divine authority upon which their rulers, disregarding alike reason, and the rights and interests of the ruled, base their claims to absolute power. Painting in France, albeit Catholic in ritual, is now taking the lead in general progress, precisely because an æsthetic race has won to itself, in science, art, and religion, scope of individual thought and action, and its government, however absolute,

\* See that instructive and remarkable chapter on the "Protective Spirit under Louis XIV." in Buckle's *History of Civilization*, p. 621. London, 1858 Second Edition.

reposes itself upon popular rights and well-being. Trace we painting elsewhere in Catholic countries like Belgium, and the same result is seen arising out of similar causes; while in Austria, where the opposite principles prevail, art and science are alike dumb. In view, therefore, of the present condition of painting in those countries which recognize or deny the doctrine of the freedom and consequent responsibility of the individual, we must admit that such vitality as it exhibits is mainly due to the liberty and enterprise of Protestantism. Hence it is that, having nothing further to hope for from effete Catholicism, the future of art depends upon the expansion of knowledge, and the quality of the aspirations of its youthful rival in the government of the world.

The principle of high art as being intimately interwoven with religion, so fully recognized by Catholic artists, is the true one. It erred in the excess and exaggeration of its application. Worship overmuch tending to the ascetic or sensual, excessive faith, and quenching of reason; such were the mistakes of Catholic art. Its prevailing tendency has been to Worship without religion; the substitution of the formula for the spirit.

Whenever, on the contrary, Protestantism has gotten the ascendancy, Anti-worship has been its prevailing feature in art. Its gods are either refined to abstractions, or exist only as mental imagery. While its religious feeling is as deep and active as its opponent's, in none of its localities has it an organized worship; a ritual of Praise and Sacrifice, independent of mere teaching.\* In this attempt to keep alive Religion without Worship, Protestantism com-

\* Some may except the Service of the Church of England from this allegation. But this is a compromise only with Catholicism, as formal and uninviting to Protestants generally as to the Catholics themselves.

mits its great error. Humanity has imperative instincts. Of these none is loftier and purer than that which leads to communion with its Author. Not alone that speculative, theological communion which hinges upon the divine invitation, "Come let us *reason* together," but that which is born more directly of the spirit, and in adoration goes welling up amid the richest offerings of the heart and intellect, alike in petitions and hosannas, direct to God himself, from assembled multitudes in harmonious accord, with no earth-stained authority or falsified tradition between them and HIM.

The rebound of Protestantism from religious art has been in proportion to its horror of idolatry and its exaltation of reason above feeling. But this extreme being wellnigh spent, the times call again for a religious art, as an auxiliary to a new and more spiritual Worship, whose advent seems at hand. Protestantism has long enough been without a vivifying faith. Its primary mission to break the bonds which coerced mind and hindered progress, to liberalize governments and fraternize peoples, destroying superstition and invigorating by divine influx human liberty and happiness, is well understood and accepted. But its greater end of reconciling man with his Maker by a faith justified by knowledge and incarnated into spiritual elements of worship, made beautiful and instructive through their associations with virtue and piety here and felicity hereafter, uniting mankind into a brotherhood of holy uses and desires, replenishing earth with the atmosphere of paradise so far as the possibilities of matter and mind admit on our present level of being, — this greater mission yet remains to be demonstrated to us.

Whoever candidly examines the two great religious phases into which Christianity is divided must acknowl-

edge that each is the extreme opposite of the other, both in its fundamental elements and final issues: faith and obedience being the aims of Catholicism, reason and liberty those of Protestantism; their mutual antagonism exaggerating the inherent vices of either system, so that the former gravitates constantly towards superstition and stagnation, and the latter incurs the risk of the extinction of worship and faith altogether. Self-sufficiency and self-abasement are their antipodal characteristics. The Church, meaning thereby infallible Authority, is the shibboleth of the one party; the Bible, implying what fallible reason may interpret of it, that of the other. Thus while the need of the former is an admixture of the elements of earthly prosperity, the want of the latter is more humility and obedience, and a diviner recognition of those immortal instincts that make all men, alike, children of a heavenly Father. He who accepts Christianity in this broad sense, appreciating with impartial view the defects or virtues of its elementary distinctions, while admitting the necessity of sectarianism in passing conditions of humanity, must also perceive that its growing tendency is towards not mere toleration but fraternity. Much demolition and clearing away of accumulated error and selfish interests remain to be done before the full reconstruction of a religious edifice based upon the solid foundations of the common truths and loftiest aspirations of Protestantism and Catholicism can be effected. Such a Church would be an eternal protest against all error, and a catholic habitation of all truth; a living Temple of Worship; human variety in spiritual unity; the medium of love and good-will from on High to all mankind; a universal Church which shall fill earth with its great white light. But the signs of Promise are now visible in the heavens. It is not for us here to speculate as

to how the New Church will root itself in humanity, nor to discern its shape and season. One, however, will arise, for the universal heart and intellect alike yearn for it. And it will be of a form and spirit that will fill those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" with the peace and joy of believing.

We are now in the transition period, when ideas are being sifted, and isolated truths fly wildly about, flashing uncertain light in the vast obscurity, now appearing, then disappearing for a while, but ever in search of the great central truth to which they are finally to be joined in orderly unity. Art participates in the universal excitement. It may not precede the great religious movement, but it will reflect it and inspired by it regain its classical and mediæval influences as a civilizing element, partaking of their æsthetic and devout spirit and exalted to more persuasive significance. We judge of its Promise by its present conditions: not the superficial imitation of past art, nor that trickery of nature which is its vulgar aspect; but that sympathy with and deep insight into nature and humanity, recognizing the likeness of God in his creation, which characterizes the strong artists of our days. They hearken to the deep, inner voice of Nature. With them the truth of externals is the language of internals; form and color corresponding to qualities which lie at the heart of things; and to them there is nothing unclean that God has made. Every created object and instinct to special use and position and all to the great Whole made necessary by divine Love and Wisdom, is a truth slow of recognition by man at large. Individualism tends to Universalism. It ignores nothing. Heart and Mind, free to act, coöperate in progress. Modern feeling for art as yet finds its chiefest gratification in landscape and domestic life. Mythology has subsided into



a love of the natural world. This is as it should be, laying for art a broad and deep foundation in the primary instincts of the heart, on which it will ultimately rise to the superior aspirations of the soul.\*

\* Among the signs of the times denoting in America the absence of the worship-principle of religion and the comparative decline of the old system of "meeting-houses," look at the relative size and cost of our dwellings, hotels, and stores in contrast with the petty, unmeaning edifices dedicated to God or presumed to be. In this relation we refer of course only to those structures which make pretensions to architecture of some kind or degree, apart from mere building, whether they be the ambitious carpentry of country mechanics or the more solid work of city designers. Wigwam and fig-leaf are sufficient protection to man from weather. But as soon as his means exceed his animal necessities, his inventive faculties find action in responding to his desires for ornament and beauty. Hence fine clothes, habitations, and whatever gratifies that lust of the eye which is animated by the desire of the heart. Architecture becomes the universal material incarnation of his most active loves. Be it understood that we use this term not as *building* but rather in the sense of ornamentation; that which adorns; carving, sculpture, and painting, composed with reference to variety in unity, harmony, symmetry, and proportion, the aim of the whole being Beauty, and the spirit which inspires it that which is for the time closest to the human heart, whether of pride, vanity, luxury, ambition, emulation, piety, or that insatiable human craving after excellence which animates every right-minded man. Now, applying this test to our present styles of architecture, it is plain that the God of the Puritans is no longer our God. In their day and after their manner they recognized a Jehovah, honoring Him to the full extent of their means and knowledge, and fearing Him with their entire hearts. The "temple-clad hills" were eloquently significant of their belief in a personal deity; just as their preaching was of their belief in a personal devil. Their *best* was consecrated to religion; government was secondary to theology; and stringent, ascetic laws kept their Deity in awful remembrance. All this is now reversed. The desires and faith of the people are in luxurious habitations, with cunningly contrived appliances of ease,—modern improvements so called,—gaud and upholstery triumphant, and in "palatial" stores. Mark that word, for it signifies much. Each new store grander than its neighbor is rejoiced over in the public prints as a palace. The people, too, believe it, and the builders mean it. Right it is, too; but only as the seed of better things, as we shall see. But for the present, while houses and stores are rising in costliness, luxury, and stateliness, each seeking to outdo its neighbor, exalting its horn to the very skies, meeting-houses—why call a building a Church or Temple that is not dedicated to Worship as well as to Preaching or Lecturing, excellent and useful as they are in their proper place and due degree, and which often shares its uses with our patron saint, GAIN—meeting-houses, we say, are so snubbed and overtopped by their worldly rivals that they seem in our streets like mere impertinences; victims gasping for vital air. And their architecture corresponds in general to their humiliation. If, indeed, an



Science now assists as it has never before done. Execution, genius given, is approaching the certainty of mathematical law. It needs but systematized coöperation

attempt to have something fine in the ecclesiastical line is tried, the result in most cases is the parodying of the Past, or the putting together of incongruous bits of its Church architecture into a mannered, lifeless whole, which becomes the fashionable toy of a congregation until some fresher and more egregious plagiarism or folly casts out its stale devils to seek new and equally profitless shapes elsewhere.

Where the treasure is there will be the heart also. Our treasure is not yet in our religious edifices; nor can it be until we are inspired to Worship. In the mean time we do love luxury and commerce. Look at our streets. Stores first in estimation, houses next, meeting-houses last. Such art as we possess,—at present an instinctive craving for beauty, and a free-will, chaotic sort of use of color, form, and symmetry; a desire for carving, and a lavish, individual display of unripened tastes, with here and there a happy feeling out the way towards something new, good, and fitted to its purpose,—such art as this is poured, freely as air, upon those objects dearest to the public mind. Hence we see in the stores primarily, and secondarily in houses, an embryo taste and feeling for art and its adaptation to the required uses, crude though they often are, yet pregnant with rich promise for the future. The growth of America is so rapid that while we pause to look at one phase of things it has swept by and is far behind us. We are racing onwards to some great and as yet unshaped good, which looms up in the active imaginations of our people like a new Canaan of Promise. And we shall reach it in art as well as other things. The growth of taste in our public grounds, the increasing refinement and delight of our populace in everything beautiful and artistic, our rural cemeteries, the Central Park, with its embryo progeny of Botanical and Zoölogical Gardens, Art Museums, and adornment with that which makes a “joy forever;” a perpetual example to our myriad of growing cities; all this convinces us that before this century shall have expired America will have wrought out for herself a new and hopeful School of Art, suited to her civilization, founded upon those great ideas which agitate her present existence. A School of Art which shall recognize all humanity; religion, instruction, decoration, refinement; old shapes made new; a vital institution that shall honor us as Italy is honored, and as Greece was, by their glorious art. We are emphatically a *new* people; unfashioned; the elements of old races and ideas fusing into an original and more complete national whole than the world has yet seen. And we have a great advantage over our maternal land in the infusion of the warmer blood of southern races into our solid stock, which quickens our imaginations and develops greater impressibility and susceptibility to artistic influences, with more vivid and fresher action and thought than is common to the old world.

Providence is doing much for us. Behold the pouring into the crucibles of those mixtures which are finally to produce the fine gold of our national being, if we but do our part. This is our transition period; the incubation of ideas and the testing of them by rude practice. Be patient. With all our apparent

between science and art, in the accumulation and diffusion of their respective knowledges for the material advance of art to be parallel with that of science. Individual effort and discovery require to be conserved and directed to the

disrespect for religion, none go about more basely than we, inquiring "What shall we do to be saved?" Problems that have sprung up amongst us must be worked out to their ultimate issues. Commercial gain is one. But Mammon will not always be the directing spirit. Selfish it now is, because it looks more to the appetite of the individual for personal accumulation than to a desire for the public welfare, or the simple laws of need and supply. But the man Jonathan gets rich, builds expensively, and creates a demand for Beauty, based upon that pride or sensuous enjoyment, which is the beginning of artistic growth. Jonathan's children, having leisure, money, and education — such of them, we mean, as are not mired in their own selfishness, littleness, or worthlessness — demand something nobler and more refined for their enjoyment. Thus by degrees, questioning, doubting, experimenting, and working, slowly throwing off the lees of the Past, we are ripening to a great Future, in which Religion, made lovely by Art, shall take her rightful place in our hearts as well as minds, and men shall again find more pleasure in dedicating buildings to the service of God than of their bodies; lavishing upon them, and upon all that elevates humanity, that wealth, taste, and knowledge we are now so rapidly acquiring. Mark too, there will be no stale repetition of old forms in our coming artistic life; but it will burn with a fire all its own; new, true, lovely, and great; rejoicing the beholder, the while lifting him up proudly as a citizen of this new world, and filling him with an assured Faith in his future life. Until, therefore, our taste and religious feeling are ripe for such an architectural consummation, better by far build as we do now, crude and unformed edifices for temporary uses of religion, about which no æsthetic feeling can gather, nor veneration cling; for they have neither beauty, comeliness, nor adaptation to the great principles of DIVINE WORSHIP, and are continually torn down, moved off, or converted into other uses, as the ponderous car of Mammon crushes down upon them, slaying right and left. The sole permanent buildings we have as yet, after their kind consistent with their motives, are our marts of business and what relates to material necessities and intellectual needs. They will long endure, the representations to the Future of the feeling and delight of this age. In our domestic requirements we have got as far as luxury. Our dwellings are full of costly contrivances to administer to our comfort and of quaint variety and wondrous æsthetic inconsistencies, as enjoyable to true taste as the nightmare to the epicure. And we say this not complainingly. These THINGS are in their progress towards the Eternal Right. Upon the broad foundation of our accumulating wealth and knowledge we shall finally ripen into an æsthetic and worshipping race, with a spiritual God, the Abolisher alike of slavery of mind, sense, or body. Till then though we may possess liberty we are not free. Once truly Free, we shall recognize Faith as the horizon of Reason; clear and well-defined according to our mental stand-point, yet projecting before us on every side infinite Enjoyment and Repose.

general end. This done, and the grammar and practice of art, its theories of light, color, design, and material, acquired, not as now by isolated work, but taught as a system of perfected science, individual genius may then begin a career with the assurance of technical success. Imagination will be less fettered to manipulation, because knowledge and discipline direct the hand. Inspired, let us hope, by visions of a new heavens and earth, whose secrets have been disclosed to it by science and faith, the principles of Protestantism and Catholicism quickened into divine fraternity, to what heights of invention may not it soar? Pagan and mediæval imagery will no longer satisfy the artist or his audience. Neither will the fallacy that, because the passions and virtues of humanity are of universal and eternal interest, the forms into which antiquity incarnated their actions must enkindle like emotions in modern hearts, be longer received. Experience ought long since to have taught artists their mistake. The people are beginning to love the natural world, and to read its lessons in all their infinite variety. Hence they love and sustain art that translates to their walls its scenes and joys. They hearken gladly to the language of their homes; their deeds, struggles, and victories in the great problem of earnest, actual life. Their "Now" charms them. Why, therefore, go back to the "now" of past races? Let their art speak for itself. When living, it was of vital interest to the peoples that begat and upheld it. But mind and morality both advance. Our world is not their world. True, patriotism is ever honorable, but the standard of patriotism is measured from age to age by the quality of its morality. Christianity now condemns what Christian notions once approved. "My country, right or wrong" has come to be an ethical crime. Each century elevates the moral understanding of international law and

public justice. A "Judith" may fittingly represent the patriotism of a barbarous race, who "smile by the deceit of lips," and who play the harlot in order to enact the assassin, as may also the murderous vows of Agamemnon and Jephthah, or the cruel sacrifice of an Abraham, the piety of so-styled heroic ages. But now if the Law might not prevent, it would punish, either deed. Cleopatras still exist, but no Cleopatra could now reign. What we demand of the artist is, that when he undertakes to symbolize beauty, virtue, or sense, he shall invent for us forms which are new and superior to the old, and in accordance with our more enlightened conceptions. Failing in this, let him not complain that the public have no instinctive feeling for art. They have. But when they ask bread do not give them stones.

If this be true of earthly motives, how much more requisite is it that art, when it again aspires to religious teaching, shall open up to us an imagery and symbolism as exalted as the incoming Faith. Not that it is to repudiate the bright beings of the past, nor to forget the ideas which gave them immortality, but it is to purge them of their dross; to extract the sting from death and the victory from the sepulchre. Then, Christ will have indeed risen for us. Asceticism, the bigotry, persecutions, and expiations of an effete theology; its threats, intolerance, and fanaticisms; its fire-lit hells and psalm-toned heavens; its fulness of material significance, obedience born of fear; faith, of tradition; hope, of divine caprice; despair, of cruel law; bribes, prayer, and sacrifice to intermediate agencies, divine and earthly, to unlock the gates of Paradise,—all these, with their attendant dictation and superstition, prolific mythology, and prostitution to ignoble worldly ends, shall pass away as completely from religious creeds as have their pagan progenitors.

What will art become ?

Who, indeed, can answer this question ! And yet let us look steadily at the heavens and see if there be no sign given. The great fundamental fact of religion is the immortality of the soul. Next, is the consciousness that its degree of happiness or misery depends upon the quality of its loves and deeds. Heaven and hell being conditions rather than localities, death but a birth from one form of being into another, superior or inferior according to the affinities and aspirations of the soul, it follows that true religion, ignoring alike the placid rest of the one, so dear to the imaginations of saints, and the unutterable agonies of the other, so haunting to shrinking nerves, must teach that hereafter, like the present, implies a continuous action or progress in the direction of the loves and knowledge cultivated on earth, leading the soul, as it elects, nearer to or more remote from that Being whose Wisdom is directing all creation to the final goal of his Law. While mankind are in a state of rudimentary knowledge, fear, with its physical imagery of torment, is the most stringent argument to quicken conscience to a sense of right-doing. Mediæval art rested its faith on this idea. And it was not wholly wrong. Evil and its consequences, if they do not actually assume the vile and terrific shapes it pictured, are none the less fearful realities for the soul, and the artist, in representing such, has only the choice of forms and results that shall most forcibly impress the minds of his audience with a holy horror of sin. Hell and its vile crew are substantial truths that mortals require to have vividly presented to their understandings, that they may appreciate the infinite cost of wickedness. So, too, of heaven. Its supernal shapes, thrones, dominions, and powers, its angels, archangels, and ministering spirits are all true. There is



no uniform level of suffering or happiness, no absolute equality nor stationary condition in either sphere ; but each soul cultivates its bliss or damnation in exact and unvarying correspondence with the qualities of its desires or knowledge. Individual will is infinite in choice and action, but divine law prescribes definite ends. Glimpses of futurity in all times have been vouchsafed to exceptional men, whose revelations, perplexing to sense-incrusted souls, are pregnant with significant truth to heaven-piercing minds. The problem for modern art to solve in its religious aspect is as successful an incorporation of the dawning faith and feeling of our times in their more spiritual conceptions of the joy of holiness and the gravity of sin, under as lofty impulses of faith and purity of zeal, as were those of the mediævalists for their times. But art cannot open up to itself this new career until the public mind is prepared to welcome and sustain it. Catholicism is now dormant from want of the revivifying agencies of liberty and reason. Worship is its rule ; teaching, the exception. Protestantism is loose-jointed in action and unsatisfactory to the religious instincts, because it beggars worship, repudiates a central authority, over-stimulates reason, and exalts the preacher more than the Word. Religion will not assume its proper relation to humanity until from out of these opposite sectarian tendencies there arises a divine reconciliation of the vital truths of each, fused into a unity in harmony with the present more enlightened platform of liberty and belief. How much more of antagonistic struggle, doubtful experiment, license, or abasement, humanity has yet to undergo in its preparation for a consummation so devoutly to be desired, mortal foresight may not know. Yet symptoms of this increasing reconciliation of the peoples with their Maker multiply in the social and political



firmaments. Knowledge is fast justifying faith to law, and deepening the consciousness of divinely ordained truth and beauty to direct and gladden the heart. Nations as well as individuals gravitate even by force of material interests more and more towards one another. The human FAMILY is dawning upon mankind as the correlative of "Our Father" in heaven. And as our eyes are opened, we shall perceive that the family is not solely an earthly institution. Palpable ties connect this life and its multiform destinies with other lives. The future is tangibly interwoven with the present by a subtle web of cause and effect; by the interblending of affections and knowledge and an infinite gradation of conditions of soul, from the most callous or contrite sinner to the exceedingly great joy of the "Faithful and True." Mediæval art did much for Christianity. But of its successor more is to be expected, as of one to whom more is given. We can faintly conceive of this new mission of art, of its more eloquent and exalted incarnations and broader and more tender understandings of heaven's persuasions and pleadings to the sons of men to enter into its joys, of its foreshadowing of the conditions and blessings of those who from amongst us have already been welcomed into supernal scenes, whose substance is spiritualized and whose being glows with the atmosphere of the new Jerusalem, whose robes are holiness, whose voices, harmony, and whose "peace passeth understanding." It may not aspire to incarnate the Inconceivable; but it surely may shine with the light of His throne and of those that walk therein. Theirs is the Triumph—ours the Struggle of Life. Every feature of the omnipresent strife betwixt good and evil,—the agencies that stimulate and tempt; the victories and defeats of the "still, small voice;" the personifications of every human or heavenly influence or fac-

ulty ; the Progress of Humanity more in the Love than the Fear of God ; its conquests, hopes, and aspirations ; Heaven descending upon Earth and Earth ascending to Heaven ; every cause of gain or loss to Mankind ; angel-winged courage and devil-instilled doubt ; the lessons of that religion that teaches the love of our neighbor as of ourself,—in short, every motive that exalts the heart and improves the understanding, opens to Art limitless invention, into which, if true to its high calling, “ there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither worketh abomination or maketh a lie.” The artist who arrives at this excellence indeed maketh the mind rich. If we are bidden to be grateful to him who causes two blades of grass to grow where but one grew before, how much more to the man who in increasing our ideas doubles our joys ! To the genuine artist, therefore, the public owe gratitude. May these words strengthen the one to do and the other to receive.



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